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Margaret Dakin

280

1

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THROUGH THE FRIENDS OF
THE BODLEIAN BY
J. G. C. Irvine, Esq.,
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Sonnet.

To Mrs. Dakin -

With the first volume of the (unpublished)
Poem of Alfred.

Lady, with choice fore thine indulgent view,
Who, tho' to all benign, of gentle mien,
Fast to the bard still kindly courteous been,
The muse her task unfolds, as deem'd thy due,
Conscious with favor, as with counsel true,
Thy friendly eye will scan whatever may glean
From antique lore Fancy, the Muses' Queen,
Or strives in song to clothe with life anew.
If e'er his Country's ear may greet the lay,
As yet unsung into broader day,
Proud will he feel, if while a female friend
May see his toil with mild attention bend,
He deem, it aught of pleasure can impart
To honour Virtue's cause, or touch with truth the heart.

John Fitchett.

Harrington -
July 1835. }





Engraved by M. Houghton, from a Print of Vertue's

A L F R E D,

A POEM.

BY JOHN FITCHETT.

VOL. I.

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1808.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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TO THE KING,

HIMSELF A PATTERN OF ROYAL DIGNITY AND PRIVATE VIRTUES,

THIS ATTEMPT

TO EXECUTE AN HEROIC POEM

CELEBRATING THE ACTS OF AN ENGLISH MONARCH,

JUSTLY REVERED AS THE FOUNDER

OF OUR PRESENT INVALUABLE CONSTITUTION AND NATIONAL GLORY,

IS

(WITH HIS MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS PERMISSION)

DEDICATED

BY HIS LOYAL AND DEVOTED SUBJECT

AND SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

...and ...

ALFRED.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK I.

The subject proposed. Invocation. The poem opens at the period, when the Danes under the command of the three Kings Guthrun, Oskital, and Amund suddenly broke their treaty of peace, confirmed by the most holy vows, and stormed the English camp at Wareham. This perfidy is instigated by the demons who are adverse to the cause of Christianity. The battle is represented, as at midnight, wherein the whole army of Alfred being routed, England is on the brink of ruin. At this critical moment, the angels meet in the sky, and after a conference, agree to terrify the superstitious Danes, by a omen from their Reafen or magical standard. This is effected, and the Danes cease to pursue the defeated English, proposing to retire to Exeter. Satan is inflamed with fury, and appearing in the clouds, threatens revenge. Dawn. The English army re-assembles. Alfred being wounded is conducted to his tent by his officers. His Queen here attends him. Alfred addresses the army. Then to discover the loss sustained, he proposes that the whole shall pass before him in review.

ALFRED.

BOOK I.

V. 1—19.

ALFRED, whose battles and successive toils
Freed from the conquest of the Danish foe
His ravag'd country, claims the grateful Muse.
He many turns of varying fortune knew
On earth, on ocean: him th' infernal pow'rs
Ceaseless oppos'd, yet vainly, for the chief
By valour as by counsel, Heav'n his friend,
Wrought England's peace, and plann'd her future weal.

Come then, thou airy queen of ev'ry Muse,
Imagination; in thy right-hand lead
The nymph of graver mien, Historic Truth.
Attend me thus, and as the voice compos'd
Of thy sedate companion may reveal
Her calm and gradual tale, sudden do thou
Catch from her lips the feeble sounds; expand
Her faint ideas into thousand forms
Of glowing images; uplift the veil
That shades her darken'd heroes from the day,
And in thy own bright colours bid them shine.

VOL. I.

B

Or deign, immortal spirit, thee I call
 Still to my aid, who from thy glorious sphere
 Descending, didst inspire that sightless bard
 With sacred raptures; him, tho' blind and dark,
 To whose capacious vision thou could'st ope
 Dread scenes of warring angels, heav'n's bright realms,
 The vast profound of hell, creation's seeds
 In chaos lost and night, earth in her prime
 Of youthful grace, with her first habitants
 Fall'n thro' deep wiles of their rebellious foe;
 Thou, from Seraphic altars who could'st bring
 Flame to the hallow'd tongue, prompt thence to pour
 Grand utterance, suited to sublimest themes;
 Deign, high instructress, at still hours of peace,
 Duly as eve leads on her welcome shades,
 Me too to visit. Touch me with a spark
 Of that prophetic fire, the birth of heav'n,
 (Nor without honour there) what may suffice
 T' illume this visual ray and fit my tongue,
 Thy votary, for this its humbler theme.
 Suffer me, Goddess, at thy awful blaze
 To light my feeble torch, which then shall shew
 To Britain's sons, with ray that may endure
 To future times, their fathers' deeds; shall thus
 Display her heroes in else-dying verse,
 And with deserved honours deck their names.

BOOK

I.

V. 19—48.

Tell then, what sudden impulse mov'd the Danes,
 Often magnanimous, and now at last
 By Alfred's arms reduc'd to leagues of peace,

So soon to violate their plighted faith,
 By holiest oaths confirm'd; and while both hosts,
 Encamp'd by Wareham's walls, indulg'd awhile
 In games, and tournaments, and festal joys,
 To rush to midnight war?

Book

I.

V. 48—78.

Th' infernal pow'rs:

Who hop'd by this so sudden fraud to gain
 Instant their purpos'd end; bent to destroy
 The Christian light, with its attendant train
 Of peace, and arts, and knowledge, order, laws,
 And social commerce, now throughout the land
 Dawning with early beams; and to restore
 The ancient reign of darkness.

Thus impell'd,

Since Britain's Chief had bound the foe to yield
 To his own sway the desolated land,
 Hell's train had breath'd into the Pagan race
 Ardor insatiate for fresh deeds of death;
 Till at the silent midnight hour, their host
 Perfidious mov'd to fight. Veil'd in thick clouds
 Hurl'd down by potent hands of beings evil
 Hov'ring aloft amid the shadowy sky,
 Swift they approach'd, full soon from end to end
 Storming the British camp, while in alarm
 The universal host all-wild convenes,
 Unnumber'd banners thro' the sable air
 Waving obscure, as crowds confus'd around
 Mingle in dim array and squadrons rude.
 The heroes gird themselves and frighted steeds
 Caparison in haste, amid the roar

Of war's dread signals and the dismal shrieks
 Of frantic wives and infant families,
 Matrons rever'd, and priests, and hoary age,
 Forth issuing from the tents, a helpless throng,
 Flying for refuge, terrified. And now
 Three dire successive hours th' infuriate Dances
 Hold the dread conflict, and in deeds of blood
 Riot o'er all the camp, their savage rage
 Glutting in carnage and unsated death.
 Night adds her aid and terrors. Over heav'n
 Darkness unusual broods. Lo! in the east
 The broad and radiant moon hath veil'd her orb,
 Eclips'd, and all her vanish'd train of stars
 Shed not a ray to pierce the murky pall
 Of thick infernal gloom from sky to sky
 O'erhung by fatal pow'rs unseen. And hark!
 Horribly yet the shock of charging hosts
 And din of battle thro' the vault of heav'n
 Tremendous rolls. Under the madden'd tread
 Of moving legions, all the tented plain
 Trembles from end to end, while host with host,
 Join'd in close conflict, outrage and uproar
 Boundless provoke, confus'd in hideous dark.
 Steeds over groaning steeds and trampled heaps
 Of heroes plunge thro' blood. The burden'd air
 Roars universal with commingled noise
 Of clanging armour, battle-axes swung
 And pow'rful scymitars on helms and shields,
 Shatter'd with tumult. Deep groans dismal blend
 Of warriors dying, numberless outstretch'd

Book
I.

V. 78—108.

O'er the wet earth, amid their shiver'd arms,
 Banners, and prostrate tents, and friends, and foes.
 Shouts mix of band from band invoking aid;
 Pagans, innumerable rushing, sternly call
 Gods to descend and view their mighty deeds.
 Bards thro' each host raise loud the songs of war
 (Familiar records of their fathers' fame)
 And from the lab'ring strings of thousand harps
 Wake martial music, the transported soul
 Swelling to highest valour. Shrieking shrill
 Close on the verge of battle, Danish wives,
 Virgins, and prophetesses, (deem'd divine)
 Fierce as the race of men, their piercing cries
 Upsend, and urge with threats their wounded sires,
 Husbands and lovers, still to new assaults,
 Price of their love and favor of the Gods,
 While thousands sink around. For underneath
 The dread tempestuous show'rs, each following each,
 Javelins, and arrows, stones, and sever'd rocks
 Hurl'd from gigantic arms, that thro' the sky,
 Viewless, in loud commotion ever flew,
 What mortal force might stand? Whole squadrons fall,
 Dash'd down like forests from the mountain sides,
 Struck by heav'n's bolts. Death reigns unseen, uncheck'd,
 And Desolation pleas'd, o'er all the camp
 With proud step stalking, by the hand leads on
 Horror and mad Confusion. Pois'd in air
 Aloft, the Demons at their full success
 Exalted, on the deathful scene look down
 With horrid malice, and, to high thoughts rais'd,

Book

I.

V. 108—136.

Glory aloud; as when amid the sky
Thunders deep-rolling crash, and mix all heav'n
In fiery storm.

Book

I.

V. 158—168.

Throughout the English host
The shouting chieftains their retiring pow'rs
Vainly exhort to rally, and sustain
Again th' unequal shock of war. O'er all
Supreme, far-echoing o'er the plain, the voice
Of Alfred, England's shield and single hope,
Resounds, as borne upon his foaming steed
He bursts thro' thickest uproar, ev'ry Chief
Calling by name, and ev'ry yielding rank
Heartening to stand, and shrink not, ere the tide
Of battle veer, and victory tho' late
Arrive propitious. Vain the Monarch's words:
For terror, and despair, the manliest hearts
O'erwhelm; himself, the sov'reign chief, ere this
Wounded by unknown hands, his anguish keen
Felt not, or scorn'd to feel, tho' from his side
Blood-currents streaming stain'd his mailed limbs.
His noble soul, was firm, collected, cool,
In direst danger.

But ah! vain his skill,
Vain ev'ry effort courage to renew
Amid the fainting troops; for now forc'd rout
And flight precipitate his total host
Usurps, and urges from th' embattled plain
Aghast and terrified, while close behind
On full-expanded steeds in mad pursuit
Th' insatiate Pagans with horrific shouts,

Louder than ocean swell'd in mountain waves,
 Pronely descend ; a tempest, flashing flames
 Wide-blazing from innumerable swords,
 Wav'd in defiance proud wherever eye
 Might turn, as on they come in fierce career,
 Fir'd all with fix'd resolve the routed host
 In universal carnage to o'erwhelm,
 And win full empire o'er the total land.
 What shall be done? Immediate ruin threats,
 And final devastation all the realm
 Of England, friendless, hopeless, unretriev'd.

Book

I.

 V. 168—197.

This knew full well, this saw with meet alarm
 Th' immortal pow'rs of heav'n ; blest sons of light,
 Who from th' empyreal courts their airy way
 Voyaging erst to Britain's favor'd isle,
 Arriv'd her guardians 'gainst the hell-born arts
 Of Satan's legions, maddening to o'erwhelm
 Her founded glory. Now delay is none,
 Ere high above the sense of mortal ear
 Throughout the wide ætherial concave rings
 With pow'r th' angelic trumpet, whose known sound
 Summons the states celestial to wont place
 Of council. Strait amid the sea of air
 The watchful essences, on buoyant wings
 Expansive floating thro' the clouds of night,
 Haste to the destin'd region of the sky
 Where underneath the topmost azure cope
 Beside the starry pole, irradiant stood,
 In circling range immense of splendid pomp,

Chariots of gold, the glorious work of heav'n,
 Like thrones, self-pois'd on gorgeous wheels. Afar
 Night vanish'd all-around, aw'd at the sight,
 And curb'd her sullen shades, such fulgent rays
 Shot from the thousand gems and living gold,
 Brighter than sunbeams o'er the fields of spring,
 When morning gilds the world. Here entering soon,
 Within their wide pavilion, in array
 Appear'd th' angelic squadrons; and at once
 His throne magnific each ascends, then seen
 In the full glory of celestial state,
 Their spreading wings bedropp'd with gold, and zones
 Cerulean beaming various-colour'd light;
 While thro' their martial mien apparent shone
 Mercy and love predominant, with form
 Mild of divinest beauty. Marshall'd now
 Beneath their star-rich canopies, to these,
 From his resplendent seat majestic rose
 Michael their arch-angelic Chief, whose port
 Kingly, and hand poising his flamy spear
 Outstretch'd, bespoke attention, while these words
 Pour'd from his lips divine drew ev'ry ear.

Book
 I.

V. 197—236.

" Synod of heav'n, to whose protective care
 Th' ALL-GOOD SUPREME consigns yon favor'd isle,
 Now see we the fall'n angels' subtle arts
 Prevailing, and in unsuspected blood
 Drenching her plains. Still fervently they long,
 (Nor ever will their dreadful fury end)
 Truth and religion, whose whole breath is peace,

But late throughout these regions proud to rear
 Yet tott'ring altars, from these heav'n-blest shores
 Eternally to chase, and in their stead
 Plant Pagan doctrines, and belief in Gods
 Fabled, yet trust in whom we see possess
 Men's hearts with quenchless thirst for war and blood.
 Mocking at peace and all the softer arts
 Of humble virtue and domestic life,
 These place sole greatness, worth, and high renown
 In death and slaughter; and proclaim the meed
 Of joys eternal to such madden'd men
 As on the bloody field their blooming lives
 Yield to their warlike gods, denouncing stern
 Horrible, endless torments after death
 To all who in ignoble quietude
 Die, aged, or at home. This horrid faith
 Well-suits the curst designs of heaven's grand foe,
 Lab'ring to stablish wickedness and wars
 Among mankind, thence surely to increase
 His own dread empire, and hell's boundless realms
 People with fiends, his subjects. Therefore still
 He burns to crush the gradual-rising pow'r
 Of that religion, breathing love, reveal'd
 In mercy down from heav'n, to civilize
 And make men happy, while it gently shews
 Whate'er is truly good and fair, and bids
 Their earth be like our heav'n, so that ev'n here,
 In this frail bud of being, fallen man
 Mindful may gain and keep habits of good,
 And thus may qualify the soul divine

Book
 I.

V. 236.—256.

Which fills and animates his fleshly frame,
 Ev'n here to know, and knowing to enjoy
 Goodness, and therefore happiness. Whence still
 Delighting in her habits, after death,
 (Man's primal doom) that soul may fit become
 As one of us; with us, (blest more and more
 As nearer we approach and suffer'd know
 HIM SOLE, THAT GREAT SUPREME, fountain of good)
 May range immortal through heaven's blissful climes
 And all creation's worlds, age after age,
 Unceasing, and in extacies of joy
 Adoring see his works, and execute
 His high behests. This knows th' arch-enemy,
 Who therefore with malignant hatred views
 Yon hero, great and good, on England's plains
 Toiling to save her sons from tyrant sway
 And Pagan slavery; not thro' lust of pow'r,
 Or mad ambition, but whose gen'rous soul
 TH' ALMIGHTY MIND has deign'd t'illumine with rays
 Divine of knowledge, with capacious views
 Of his own nature, and whate'er can form
 Man's bliss below. Hence 'tis the chieftain burns
 By humanizing arts and union sweet
 Of social comforts, to refine and bless
 His country, rude as yet and unrestrain'd;
 And on the base of true religion, law,
 And commerce, found an empire for her sons,
 Which to succeeding ages shall dispense
 Peace, science, happiness. His cares shall raise
 England to height of manners, wealth, and pow'r.

Book

I.

V. 256—286.

Now therefore since we see the hellish league
 Prevalent, lest they gain their utmost wish,
 Resistless pouring o'er the conquer'd land,
 Behoves us to descend, and swift restrain,
 As best we may, yon horrible pursuit,
 Rousing by prodigies the ominous awe
 And rev'rent superstition of the foe,
 Till retrograde he turn, and cease at length
 To steep in blood yon carcase-cover'd plain."

Book

I.

V. 286—315.

He spoke, and thro' the vast assembly rose
 Th' applausive music of their golden shields,
 Which struck by thousand quiv'ring spears sent forth
 Sonorous harmony, portending deeds
 Of valourous worth. Nor longer here they rest,
 But 'mid the clouds of night, seen far below
 Rolling fuliginous, down plunge they all
 On outspread wings impetuous,—when, behold!
 With next t' almighty arm, they tear the web
 Of Stygian gloom, and thro' th' aërial hall
 Chase the thick shades of darkness, cloud on cloud
 Heap'd awful, to th' horizon's utmost bound.
 Swift o'er the blue-revealing, starry sky
 Light universal beams: the broad, full moon
 Bursts sudden forth; but gloomy-red appear'd
 Her face, reflecting from the purpled earth,
 Whereon she gaz'd aghast, the hue of blood.
 Then to the shrinking eye was first disclos'd
 The dreadful field of death, where slaught'rous war
 Still rag'd o'er dead and dying, and the camp

Prostrate. In full pursuit the madden'd Danes,
 Under their thousand banners moving fast,
 Gaze upward, startled at the sudden light,
 While the faint English, flying swift, dispers'd,
 Lift their despairing eyes, wherein some gleam
 Flash'd now of distant hope, as back they look
 Astonish'd.

Lo ! amid the Danish host
 Th' archangel has arriv'd, where, high upborne,
 Blaz'd like a comet 'mid the turbid air
 Their mighty standard, to the watchful moon
 Waving its gleamy bulk, horrent with gold.
 Apparent in the midst, as if alive,
 The pictur'd raven stood, by fated hands
 Of royal virgins wove with magic rites,
 Breath'd to avenge a murder'd father's blood.
 Now black it stood and vast, rearing aloft
 Its sable form terrific, with keen eye
 Seeming to scan the deeds of hosts below ;
 Far-seen with awe by all the sons of war,
 Wherever helms on helms in long array
 A shadowy splendour cast, as ocean waves
 Subsiding, when the tempests, thunder-wing'd,
 Have torn their watry beds. Lifted it mov'd
 By valiant chosen hands, inclos'd around
 By solemn priests and virgin prophetesses,
 Skill'd to expound its ever-varying shape,
 While near on all sides round, favor'd of kings,
 For its protection throng'd the choicest war.
 Touch'd by the angel's hand invisible,

Book

I.

V. 315—345.

Behold! the imag'd bird, omen of fate,
 With living motion seiz'd, in sight of all
 Droops its sunk head: down fall its shudd'ring wings, v. 343—374,
 And hide its pendent crest: tott'ring it drops,
 Prone to the pictur'd ground, faint as in death.

Book

I.

Immediate from the victor host arose
 Shrieks horrible of terror and dismay,
 Filling heaven's concave: shouts and cries succeed,
 That stun all ears. Lo! wond'rous to relate,
 Suddenly stops the universal mass
 In height of victory; nor the hot pursuit
 Nor lust of battle claims one wand'ring thought.
 Sole tow'rd the awful omen each man bends
 His total soul. Forth from their thousand bands
 In trembling consternation furious spring
 Kings, leaders, chiefs; Guthrun and Oskital,
 And Amund, mighty warriors! Hubba there,
 And Hinguar, brothers of the fatal three
 Who wove the dreadful ensign: issuing flew
 Frena and Sidroc, potent Thanes; with these
 Names other, known to fame, in battailous deeds
 Tried and renown'd, too num'rous to recount.
 Thronging all hasten tow'rd the mystic sign,
 There to consult the heav'n-inspired dames,
 Daughters of kings, with holy awe rever'd;
 Eager from their unerring lips to learn
 What means this dread portent, and high decree
 Of their offended Gods. To these the maids
 With hands uplifted and cheeks saintly-pale,

And eyes, full-streaming, in deep transport rapt,
Rais'd tow'rd the sacred ensign, give response.—

Book
I.

V. 374—401.

“ All further battle and pursuit must end.
On these the Gods now unpropitious frown:
So Odin, God of war, heaven's awful king,
And Frea, his great spouse, who shares the slain,
And Thor, their son, the God of thunder, doom.”—

This heard, strait all resolve to send around
Heralds to every leader, bearing charge
To cease pursuit; counsel to which each chief
Willing assented; all, save Oskital,
Dread tyrant, fierce in rapine as in blood.
He, swelling with indignant rage to hear
Battle and plunder now must end, with frowns
Vented the gloomy purpose of his soul.

“ Why, thro' false terrors of offended Gods,
Forego we our advantage, nor o'erwhelm
The foe, and stablish here perpetual reign?
Losing the fair occasion now to seize
Alfred, our constant pest, and to our Gods
Offer him, victim proud: sure now to gain
Spoil endless. Possibly this dire portent,
Wrongly interpreted, may yet allow
Further pursuit. Th' insatiable Gods
Never can bid us stay the slaught'ring arm
In height of victory! Or if we dissent,
Sending more souls to Odin and his fates,

He will forgive, and ev'n the bold emprise
 Approve, and deem us heroes fit to share
 His awful presence, and with glorious meeds
 Of partial favor honor us in heav'n.
 Follow we then, nor longer cease from war."

Book

I.

V. 401—429.

Fir'd by his words, some stand in asking doubt,
 Till Guthrun, king of men, their leader prime,
 Sternly his thoughtful counsels thus declar'd:

" Impious! how ever canst thou hope to share
 Valhalla's joys, and be with heroes rang'd,
 Doom'd on that terrible great day to fight
 The battles of the Gods, when all their foes,
 Ascending from the nether world, shall meet
 Amid the sky, bent to o'erwhelm their thrones,
 And win dominion o'er the boundless heav'n?
 How ever, disobedient! hope to scape
 Niflheimer's torments, where unsated Death
 Reigns through her dreary realms, dispensing souls
 Of cowards and bad men, thro' dens and caves,
 To dwell with famine, pain and misery?—
 Forbear, and listen to the Gods' decree.
 Let us revere the Gods, if 'tis their will
 Pursuit must end: 'tis ev'n what warrior-souls
 Might wish; for why should we pursue the foe
 Defeated, and confus'd, and render'd thus
 Unequal by so much? What could the bards
 Sing of our valour, if we thus assail
 A routed host? No: let them now regain

Their wonted strength, that soon we may be join'd
 In fresh and frequent battles, learning thence
 To stand intrepid amid fiercest war,
 And die exulting on the bloody field:
 Heroes, then worthy Odin, and to live
 In his glad presence, with the deathless throng
 Of heroes in Valhalla's palaces.
 My soul proud sees the Gods forbid pursuit,
 And for new wars reserve their favor'd sons.—
 Call too to mind this our new-plann'd emprise;
 Have we not late to Kenwulph sent command,
 Our tributary king of Mercia's plains,
 With all his host of vassals to appear
 By Exham's walls, where soon our camp array'd
 Easy shall win the fertile country round?
 Therefore oppose not, but the will of fate
 Observe, and what thy warrior-peers deem wise."

Book
 I.

V. 439—458.

Struck by the king's rebuke, to them his thoughts
 Amund, the third in pow'r, thus calm express'd.
 "Oskital, hearken to the sovereign's words.
 Tho' much for present battle and high deeds,
 Pow'rful to send my name to future times,
 My bosom longs,—yet what the Gods decree
 I deem it best t' obey."

This counsel pleas'd.
 Dissension none is heard, but high applause
 Of Guthrun, as o'er heroes worthy well
 To rule. Strait active heralds to each band
 Are sent, commission'd from the sov'reign kings

To bid the legions sheath their gory swords,
 And cease pursuit. Observant all obey.
 And soon o'er all th' embattled field are seen
 The Danish squadrons moving, deep-array'd
 In close-form'd union for retiring march.
 Their music loudly blew sounds of retreat;
 Their armour, glistening in the lunar rays,
 Toss'd to the fading light impetuous gleams:
 All overhead rich-floating banners wav'd.
 Magnific scene! filling th' astonish'd eye
 From end to end of all the spacious plain;
 Like some proud-tow'red city in a blaze,
 When midnight veils her pomp, but flashing fast,
 Rise thro' the smoky volumes, crimson-ting'd,
 Numberless pyramids of dusky fire.
 Thus they, in distance lessening, haughty drove
 O'er tents and prostrate slain, trampling thro' blood.

Book

I.

V. 458—467.

This heart-afflicting, unexpected sight
 Th' infernal pow'rs endur'd not, but to rage
 Yielding loose sway, high mid the low'ring heav'n,
 Where well he deem'd th' angelic squadrons met,
 Satan forth issued, to their shudd'ring sight
 Visibly present: shrin'd in sable clouds
 And tempests rolling round, his form obscure
 But half appear'd; his wildly-prominent limbs
 Thro' darkness mov'd: seem'd crown'd his tow'ring head,
 As o'er the clouds his billowy waving locks
 Shook awful: from his lifted arm forth came,
 Terribly vast, a shadowy spear outstretch'd,

VOL. I.

D

Measuring the sky. Behind their furious King
 Stood other dreadful forms. His mighty shape
 In pow'r seem'd likest to Ceraunian Jove;
 Match'd 'gainst his giant-foes, whose pride aspiring
 To win the throne and sov'reignty of heav'n,
 Heap'd Ossa on Olympus, when in fury
 Forth issuing, shrouded amid gloomy fire,
 His arm omnipotent unceasing launch'd
 Tremendous thunders, pestilence and storms,
 That tore the boundless-vaulted sky, and prone
 Smote their insensate legions, while the God
 Strode over prostrate hills, and in his wrath
 Triumphant trampled on the monstrous brood.
 Nor long the Demon-fury silent stay'd,
 But in a voice, which to th' angelic ears
 Itself seem'd peals of thunder, his proud vaunts
 And swelling menaces thus fierce address'd.

Book

I.

~~Book~~
V. 487-516

" This is your work, vile servile ministers,
 To save from utter ruin your lov'd land,
 And stop th' exterminating, slaught'rous rout
 Of your weak English, which I joy and boast
 T' have plann'd and half perform'd. Nor shall you fail
 Your present wish: I grant it to proceed.
 But know, base-crouching slaves, that I, the spirit,
 Before whose thund'ring arm you fled dismay'd
 With terror in that heav'n, whose glories I
 Grieve not t' have lost, or want; know, I with all
 My host, most horribly will be aveng'd.
 For this: inducing on your wretched land

Vengeance tenfold, ruin more ruinous,
 Slaughter and desolation fiercer far,
 Such as your timid thoughts never conceiv'd,
 Insatiable, relentless, unfatigued;
 Till here we stablish never-ending wars,
 And banish hence yourselves, with that weak faith
 Inspiring peace and meekness, fit alone
 For spirits base as yours; which you still toil
 To found among mankind, whence they may grow
 Apt subjects of your own low-bending heav'n.
 But ere long time revolves, the busy King
 Destroy'd, whose anxious cares you eager watch,
 We here shall firmly plant a nobler faith,
 Feelings more fierce and manly, which may make
 Men like ourselves, and fit with us to share
 Our own illimitable, gloomy world,
 To swell my throned state, and people hell
 Thro' all her stormy realms and dark domains,
 Where, thro' eternal ages, they may live
 Fall'n as ourselves. Deem not that we intend
 To suffer there alone, but to abridge,
 Our utmost, your society and pow'r.
 Henceforth then, war becomes my sole delight;
 My glory, desolation. For with you
 I'sdeign communion, but immortal hate
 Still cherish, and ye know if ere my deeds
 Prove weaker than my words. Wherefore expect
 Acts answering to implacable revenge."

Book

I.

V. 316-443

Nor more; but in contempt th' infernal King.

Turn'd, and retiring slow after him drew
 The clouds immense, whose circling veil involv'd
 His angry host, o'ershadowing in long arch
 The Danish legions, as their glimm'ring ranks
 Fast left the straining sight.

BOOK
 I.

V. 545-572.

With horror struck,
 Stood a brief space th' angelic bands, to hear
 Those blasphemous words, pregnant with rooted ire ;
 Till soon recov'ring, their supernal Chief
 To action meet recall'd their pond'ring thoughts.—

“ Let us be calm and firm; nor fear these threats,
 Ere we behold Hell's Monarch strive t' effect
 What he forebodes; tho' from his rage malign
 'Tis likely his dark vengeance may attempt
 Some horrid schemes. But since the mad pursuit
 Now ceases, we retiring may confer,
 How best we may repair this mournful loss,
 How best assist the sov'reign hero's toils,
 Directing to the camp the flying bands ;
 Till, ere long space, the scatter'd host resume
 Its wonted station: there observant watch
 The prudent councils of the rallied chiefs,
 Thus England's safety provident to gain,
 And work her peace and lasting happiness.”

Thus they; and, smooth-receding, all the air
 Dropp'd with ambrosial fragrance, as with dews.

Now Dawn approach'd, and thro' the gates of light

Early apparent, while the glorious Sun
 Ascending o'er the redden'd ocean-verge,
 Follow'd with all his train of golden pomp,
 She in her purple chariot high advanc'd,
 Her forehead circled with the morning stars,
 Rein'd with imperial hand her grey-wing'd steeds,
 Serenely floating up the twilight heav'n.
 While now the English bands scatter'd diverse
 (The slaught'rous ruin ceasing, and the foe
 Departed far) the remnant of their force
 Collect, and back retrace their pensive way
 Tow'rd the fall'n camp. Of these recov'ring first
 The Sov'reign Monarch led his noble band;
 Advancing at whose head, in martial state
 Rode the great Chieftain; on his haughty steed
 Whose tall plumes wav'd, as slow he pranc'd along,
 He sat majestic: tow'ring high he bore
 His manly front, half by his gold-bright shield
 Envelop'd. Still undaunted and serene
 Amid defeat, his looks awoke in all
 Reviving hope. His right arm wielded firm
 The massy lance, tho' his yet-bleeding wound
 Throbb'd with keen anguish, and his glitt'ring limbs
 Streak'd thick with clotted gore, to ev'ry eye
 Told his late peril. Broad before-him shone
 Th' imperial standard, in the winds of morn
 Impatient tossing, 'mid whose radiant pomp,
 Flaming with silky splendor gems and gold,
 Th' emblazon'd lions glar'd, o'er all the field
 Conspicuous turning, as the rustling gales

BOOK

I.

V. 572—602.

Shook their proud forms.

Behind the Monarch mov'd

Book

I.

V. 602—603.

Brilliant in arms, his chos'n attendant train,
 The flower of southern provinces, a throng
 Martial in aspect, all well-skill'd to wield
 The hostile spear. These following o'er the plain
 In long procession, near their much-lov'd prince
 With fonder ardor press, elate to view
 The gallant Chief his wonted place resume.
 Around their glitt'ring skirts, at distance due,
 The princely tufas wav'd, on whose white staff
 The various-colour'd plumes, nodding aloft,
 Form'd a resplendent globe, to ev'ry heart
 As life or honour dear, known from afar,
 Royalty's ensign. Thus they pass'd along,
 Cheer'd by the joyous sounds of music sweet,
 A noble band, lessen'd, but num'rous still.
 For in that dreadful fight, while thousand foes
 Thrice with impetuous fury charg'd their ranks,
 Thrice had the dauntless Monarch cheer'd his train
 To stand the shock; then on the foe in turn,
 Led by the King, who, fir'd with noble rage,
 Seizing his banner, foremost with loud shouts
 Rush'd terrible, had these in emulous zeal
 Rapt to transporting frenzy, fierce advanc'd,
 Following their Chief. Their desolating swords
 Nought could resist: from their continuous edge
 Whole legions fell, struck as by lightning fires,
 Till thro' the carnag'd field to difficult life
 And safe recess they wrought their wond'rous way.

Then following, Oddune came, the valiant chief
 Of Devon's province, heading his tall train
 Practis'd in war, whose darkly-waving locks
 Shadow'd their brawny shoulders as they mov'd,
 Intrepid courage in their steadfast looks.

BOOK

I.

V. 632—661.

Follow'd the vet'ran Herbert, whose long sway
 Dorsetian valleys own'd, and sent their pow'rs
 Banded beneath his rule, now marching on
 In multitudinous ranks of warlike men,
 Part seated high on foaming steeds, select
 From hills and fertile plains; infantry part,
 Whose sounding armour echoed as they strode
 Untir'd, and eager for adventurous deeds
 Of future war.

Osmond came next, the good
 And noble leader of the banded troops,
 The choice of Cornwall's fields; heroic throng,
 Lov'd of the Monarch.

These with haste advance
 To gain th' unpeopled camp. Nor long their course:
 For soon their pow'rs, amid the fallen tents
 And dismal vestiges of death, arrive.
 Horrible scene! where hideous Ruin wide
 Upheld her desolate reign, and every look
 Congeal'd the shudd'ring heart.

The wounded King,
 Held by his agitated Chiefs, repairs
 Where late the regal tent conspicuous rose,
 Soon entering mid the yet unfallen dome.

Strait on a broider'd couch that glitt'ring stood
 Within the spacious canopy, they seat
 The wearied Monarch, who his steely helm
 Unlac'd, and o'er his paler face his locks
 Fell dank. The heart-struck chiefs, with anxious care
 Approaching rev'rent, wipe his chilly brows;
 While others from the custom'd store forth reach
 The cheering wine. The Monarch drank; but soon
 His better thoughts recov'ring, with his chiefs
 Confers his lab'ring purpose, bent to send
 Heralds around to all the scatter'd troops
 With charge to seek direct the fallen camp.
 This counsel quick approv'd, some to their bands
 Forth issue, and dispatch swift messengers,
 Bearing the Sov'reign's high commands.

Book

I.

V. 661—691.

Return'd

Soon tow'rd the tent, lo! his beloved wife,
 Elsweda, prime of women, honour'd Queen,
 Her hair dishevell'd, her loose garments wild,
 Eager enquiring for her much-lov'd spouse,
 Accosts them at the threshold, follow'd strait
 By her fair handmaid, bearing in her arms
 The Monarch's infant son, the latest care
 Of his fond mother. She no sooner hears
 Her husband safe, but 'mid the crowded tent
 Enters. The chiefs bow rev'rent. She beheld
 Aghast, with pale surprise and countenance ope,
 Him, her lov'd husband, on the couch reclin'd,
 Pallid and faint, his armour frequent stain'd
 With streamy gore. Recov'ring, she approach'd

Tender, and taking soft his hand, with looks
 That spoke ineffable affection, hung
 In silence o'er him, pressing on his lips
 A fond and holy kiss. He mild receiv'd
 Her kind caresses, grateful to his heart
 As his own being, and with faint voice asks
 Of her own safety;—of their children's weal.
 With falt'ring tone she tells, that these are left
 Safe in a distant tent, in anxious charge
 Of his kind sister;—that her youngest care
 Follows with her attendant.—But at sight
 Of his pierc'd mail and wounded side, her voice,
 In trembling agitation, stops: she bends,
 And with her flowing garment gently clears
 The clotted blood, exerting now, as wont,
 Her art, the pride of noble women, here.
 The sole physicians, emulous to heal
 Their dear relations' oft-inflicted wounds:
 Unbinds the twisted mail, with gentle touch
 Deceives the throbbing anguish, and applies
 The ready mixture of known styptic herbs,
 Whose virtue can assuage and banish pain.
 Thus, as the beauteous Queen her meekest care
 Employ'd, soft-starting from her azure eyes,
 Stream'd o'er her vermeil cheeks the graceful drops
 Of love, by pity wak'd; each warrior's heart
 Melting to silent sympathy. Her tears
 Seem'd as when violets, (after stormy rains
 Have drench'd the earth) shook by the winds of eve,
 Smooth o'er their blue leaves roll the brilliant drops,

Book

I.

V. 691—791.

Left in their balmy cups, and wide disperse
 Their liquid fragrance o'er the freshen'd ground.
 As thus assiduous by his side she lean'd,
 The Monarch, thoughtless of the rankling wound,
 Or to divert its anguish, his lov'd child
 Call'd to his arms, and soft-upbearing took
 The tender burthen from the bending nurse;
 Kiss'd the fair boy: his rosy-swelling cheek
 Press'd fond, and in endearing accents spoke.
 Smiling, the infant knew its father's voice,
 Pleas'd, and extending soon its little hands,
 Grasp'd fast his steel-girt neck; then in delight
 Stretch'd o'er the shining mail, speckled with blood,
 Its iv'ry fingers. At such sportive play
 Of the fair innocent, th' admiring chiefs,
 And father, tend'ring smil'd. Then thro' her tears
 Uplooking lovely, all the mother's heart
 Beam'd in her eyes, while a subduing smile
 Illum'd her face, and check'd a rising sigh,
 Sooth'd by th' endearments of the thoughtless babe.

Book

I.

V. 721—750.

The Monarch to his amiable spouse
 Yields grateful thanks for this her fostering care,
 And feels returning strength. Now to his chiefs
 He opes his strong desire amid the troops
 To pass, and view the ruins of the camp,
 There to observe whate'er requir'd their care;
 For well he deem'd his presence would diffuse
 Courage thro' all, seen yet alive, nor lost
 In that dire conflict.

Soon, amid the camp
 And field of war arriv'd, heart-thrill'd they pause,
 Seeing such ravage as no pen can paint,
 Or tongue distinct relate. Ramparts destroy'd,
 Tents overwhelm'd; wide over all the field,
 Wherever eye could view, armour bestrown,
 Gory and shatter'd; men and steeds commix'd,
 Dying or dead; and o'er them frequent thrown
 Torn standards, steep'd in blood.

Book

I.

V. 750—778.

With eager haste,
 Pouring from ev'ry side, fresh bands arrive,
 And o'er the plain with various view disperse;
 Some to repair the prostrate mounds, some prompt
 To raise, or form anew their shatter'd homes.

As on the chieftains pass, cries and laments
 And frequent shrieks on ev'ry hand assail
 Their ears, from many a wretched son upsent,
 Finding his father pale and dead. Or where
 Full many a tender wife, now widow'd, knelt
 Fond o'er her fallen husband, cold in death.
 There many a mother, starting in affright,
 Thro' broad and ghastly wounds, scarce recogniz'd
 Her youthful son, while o'er his shatter'd corse
 She hung, and, clasping, kiss'd his dear remains,
 Whelm'd in despair of grief. The loaded air
 Resounds with various ut'rance of loud woe
 In dismal discord. O'er their wounded friends,
 Pallid, but yet alive, full many bend

Or raise them in their arms, while lifting soft
 Their languid eyes, these breathe their latest life
 Into the breast of those they love most dear.
 Matrons and virgins eager o'er the field
 Exert their healing art, their dearest boast,
 And sooth full many a wound, wash'd with their tears.
 To deep compassion mov'd, the Sov'reign Chief,
 Passing amid the mournful scene, full oft
 Beholds, attended thus with pious care,
 Some wounded hero, whose brave deeds he knew
 And gratefully remember'd. Him he takes
 Fond by the hand, bids him be of good hope,
 Nor doubt recov'ry, till such soothing words
 And mild engagements from the much-lov'd prince,
 Draw from th' attend'ed warrior, spite of pain,
 A grateful tear, and o'er his speechless face
 Spread smiles of peace, delighted to receive
 These kind attentions near the arms of death.

Book

I.

V. 778—807.

Thus long on ev'ry hand th' innum'rous host,
 Earnest employ'd, dispense their various care,
 Till the whole camp and wide-spread champaign, fill'd
 With moving crowds, spoke all the several bands
 Assembled. This the watchful Monarch soon
 Observing, pregnant with emotions high,
 Disperses round swift heralds, with command
 That all the legion'd bands, in order best,
 Under their sev'ral leaders join their ranks,
 Whom thus the King attentive may behold;
 May see their present state; what force, impair'd,

Asks chief supply, or what unhurt remains.
 Busy o'er all the field the troops prepare
 Before the Monarch to appear; all pleas'd
 To gain th' attention of his placid eyes,
 Wont on them all with manly love to beam.
 Warriors, their wounds now eas'd of keener pangs,
 Hearing these tidings, deem the much-lov'd Chief
 Bent to address the host, and of delay
 Impatient, scorn their pain, and eager move,
 Supported, to behold and hear once more
 The honour'd King. Such eagerness pervades
 The total host to catch the martial fire
 Warming his noble soul, that every heart
 Throbb'd high; and soon in range magnific spread
 A semi-circle vast, of deep array,
 Presents to sight its order'd arch immense;
 While o'er th' embattled pomp, broad-glitt'ring, wav'd
 Unnumber'd ensigns, tossing in the winds.
 Shields, lock'd in shields, a fiery splendor cast,
 Flashing afar. Terrific to the view
 Stood the firm bulwark of their steely front,
 Like some huge rampart, rais'd on high, to guard
 Coasts from the ocean, whose proud strength defies
 His mountainous waters, lab'ring to o'erwhelm
 The stedfast pile, which sole forbids his waves
 To rush o'er valleys, cities, people, plains,
 And stays his empire o'er a delug'd land.

Eager all waited the directing voice
 Of the brave Monarch: he, above the rest,

Book
 I.

V. 807—836.

On a broad altar rais'd of massy stone,
 Stood in the midst, majestic. Near him press'd
 His ducal chiefs, gazing with sacred awe
 On the lov'd King: pre-eminent he shone
 Conspicuous from afar. His golden helm,
 Under whose plumes, high waving, radiant beam'd
 The regal diadem, his manly face
 Shadow'd, not cover'd. His right hand sustain'd
 His massive spear; his left, his ample shield,
 Pictur'd on whose bright round Britannia sat,
 Thoughtfully gazing on her ravag'd isle.
 Silent awhile he stood: like some tall rock
 Unmov'd, around whose awful sides appear
 The sea-fowl clinging, while it lifts on high
 Its sky-capt front, indignant of the storm.
 While sounding trumpets, clarions, and loud drums
 Hail'd their Commander, o'er the sea of helms
 And beamy spears he cast his wary eyes;
 And as the burnish'd armour of the hosts
 Shone to the sun, at thought of martial deeds,
 A kindling ardor swell'd his rising soul.
 He wav'd his spear. Sudden the clangor deep
 Of music ceas'd: respectful silence ran
 Thro' all the host, and not a sound disturb'd
 The solemn pause: then, with voice heard afar,
 The Monarch in heart-moving accents spoke.—

Book

I.

V. 836—863.

“ Englishmen, Warriors:—A dreadful dawn,
 Disclosing to our sight these ravag'd plains,
 Strown with our murder'd fathers, brothers, friends,

Summons us to new war: proud then I see
 Your wonted zeal returning: much it needs.
 Now have we all beheld our savage foes
 Bound by no ties of faith, of every vow
 Regardless, that no more must leagues contract
 That peace which valour can alone compel.
 Have we not seen o'er all our neighb'ring states,
 Where treaties purchas'd peace, these madden'd men
 Lawless to rage, and breathing only death?
 O'er all their fields, once deck'd with woods and groves
 And smiling verdure, where our fathers' flocks
 Loiter'd at ease,—where fertile rivers wound
 Their tranquil course, along whose banks arose
 Our fathers' happy homes, where busy towns
 Rais'd frequent o'er the land their sacred fanes,—
 Now we behold one face of ruin spread,
 Their provinces o'er-run, their princes slain,
 Or fled thro' fear to distant coasts, their plains
 A blacken'd waste, depopulated, drear!
 Temples, towns, cities, sack'd by impious fires;
 The wretched habitants, now trembling slaves;
 Spar'd neither sex nor age! The hoary head
 Invaded! Virgins, mothers, wives defil'd!
 Heav'n's ministers pursu'd to cruel death!
 While in these dreadful scenes, with savage joy
 Riots the lawless foe, happy alone
 In blood and battle, tyranny and spoil!
 Oh England! Oh, my country! That thy plains,
 Form'd for mild industry, and peace and joy,
 Should witness scenes like these! My bleeding heart

Book

I.

V. 863—891.

Starts cold within me at the thought of these
 The miseries which afflict thy groaning land.
 Last, my lov'd countrymen,—one family,
 In the same bond united, one our doom,—
 Last on ourselves become the single stay
 Of our else-fallen country, they attempt
 Like ruin. Heav'n defend, that ever fear
 Should on our plains entail like misery!
 Shall we then suffer the perfidious foe
 To add new insults, and before our eyes
 Cover our plains with slaughter? Shall we see
 Tamely, our murder'd fathers, brothers, friends,
 Strown in our streets? Behold these Pagan wolves
 Prowl with insatiate ravage o'er our fields,
 Butcher our infants in their mother's arms,
 Or hurl them mangled 'mid their flaming homes?—
 My countrymen, to me as children dear,
 A cause such as before ne'er call'd for arms,
 Summons our valour: call'd to fight for all
 Most dear to man—ourselves, our wives, our babes,
 Our homes, our hapless country. Heav'n itself,
 In its own cause, invokes us to defend
 Our true religion; our just, equal laws;
 Nor, in their stead, transmit the bloody faith,
 And rude decrees, of Pagans to our sons,
 A sad inheritance! With Heav'n our friend,
 What shall we fear?—But ev'n were that unsure,
 (Which who can doubt?) say, shall we trembling wait
 Till, back returning, our insatiate foes
 Whelm in one common carnage all our host,

Book

I.

V. 895—925.

Slain in cold blood? No, honour'd countrymen!
 If we are doom'd to fall, let us at least
 Fall nobly, fighting in defensive war,
 For home, for life, for liberty, for Heav'n.
 War must revive. I cannot wrong your souls
 By arguments: I trust, I know you all
 Valiant, and valour now the cause demands.
 Now will we never shrink, or own repose,
 But patient smile at dangers, pain and death,
 Till our persisting arms at last restore
 England to peace and safety. Future times,
 Wond'ring, shall learn the story of our toils,
 And, struck with pious gratitude, shall hail
 Us their deliv'ers, fathers; fond shall bless
 Our prudent courage, which while daring, wise,
 Snatch'd from the verge of ruin's dread abyss
 Our trembling country; her, all hopeless, rais'd
 From woe to happiness, from death to life.
 Heading such legions, thus shall I, untir'd,
 Brother in arms and sharer of your toils,
 Lead you to glory, freedom, victory!"

Book
 I.

V. 925—934

He ceas'd—and strait from all the host arose
 Shouts that thro' heav'n resounded: follow'd soon
 Tremendous clangor of their bossy shields,
 Struck by vast lances and impetuous spears,
 Signal of high applause: awful and loud,
 As thunders o'er the sea, from pole to pole
 Terribly rolling, thro' the cavern'd waves
 Bellow, when tempests, red with lightnings, swell

VOL. I.

F

The hollow'd surge. Zeal glow'd in ev'ry face,
 With ardent confidence, as tow'rd the King
 And on each other gaz'd the total host,
 In silence, but to fervent feelings rapt
 Mightier than words could utter. Instant march
 And battle undelay'd to ev'ry heart
 Seem'd easy; but the prudent Monarch knew
 Needful augmented pow'r, ere yet again
 His shatter'd army in the deathful field
 Might meet th' innumerable foe; nor from their hordes
 And unrelenting fury, rashly tempt
 Total destruction. He his purpos'd thought
 Pursuing, forthwith issues mild command
 That all the legion'd bands in station due
 Under their sev'ral leaders, pass succinct
 In wont review before him, whence his eye
 Certain might apprehend their real state,
 And mark the losses of each lessen'd pow'r.

Book
 I.

V. 954—972.

ALFRED.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK II.

The English army reviewed. The chiefs and their several characters described. Burial of the dead. Alfred and his officers attend the funeral of Seward, an English Earl, who had been killed in the battle. Alfred, at the request of the bards, sings his funeral song. A council of war is held in the royal tent, during which, intelligence is brought that the inhabitants of the country are flying before the army of Kenwulph, the revolted King of Mercia, now on its march to join the Danes; and are hastening to the camp of Alfred for refuge. The council determines that the present English army is inadequate, in point of number, to contend with the enemy to advantage; and that it is expedient for the Earls to depart to their several counties, to collect in person new forces among their vassals. This embassy is to take place the following morning, and all are to return by the fifth day. Evening. The fugitive inhabitants are received into the English camp. Alfred gives a feast to his officers, previous to their departure. Night. In the morning the Earls depart.

... ..

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ALFRED.

BOOK II.

v. 1—17.

THE Monarch gives the word. Sudden the sound
Of thousand trumpets fills the echoing air.

Say, Goddess Muse, what ducal chiefs renown'd,
Ruling seven southern provinces, the realm
Of Wessex, sole remaining unsubdued,
Led to th' unequal war their banded pow'rs.

First, sternly seated on his warhorse proud,
Came the majestic Oddune, Devon's Duke,
Whom follow'd, in long train of broad array,
His chosen horsemen, bright in gorgeous arms.
Their shields immense, and beamy spears erect,
Shone like some wintry forest, wrapt in ice,
Glitt'ring before the sun. Haughty they came,
Proud of their streaming hair, while o'er their helms
Wav'd their red banners. In their order'd ranks
Rode many noble Thanes, Devon's boast;
By valour most ennobled, which had won

The Monarch's love. Rulers of hundreds there
 Held due command. Many decennaries
 Own'd rule subordinate, whose several pow'r
 One tything of ten families obey'd.
 These following, next appear'd in stately march
 His num'rous train of infantry. Tall helms
 Shook their proud plumes, as on they came, with noise
 Of mailed armour. Glaring on their breasts,
 Targes of brass in dreadful range appear'd,
 Prominent from whose central boss stood forth
 Spikes bladed, keen as swords, whose mortal touch
 Pierc'd threefold mail in adverse fight. Each wore
 His massy falchion by his belted side,
 While their right hands upbore armour diverse,
 Huge battle-axes some, others vast spears,
 Slings, bows, or iron darts, or pond'rous clubs
 Blood-stain'd. Each knew his station'd rank, conjoin'd
 All in consorted league, with solemn vows
 T' avenge the death of ev'ry neighbour-friend,
 Ere to the dang'rous war they came, and left
 Pensive their happy homes. Their band contain'd
 Full many an honour'd bard, their proud delight,
 Skill'd all in songs of fame. Virgins and dames,
 Knew the distinguish'd honours of this band:
 Their streaming locks, their train of envied bards,
 And to their various claims of high respect
 Yielded due reverence, by each hero sought,
 His dearest guerdon. As the legion pass'd,
 The Monarch thoughtful eye'd their warlike train
 Much lessen'd, tho' yet strong; and soon he calls

Book
 II.

V. 18—47.

Oddone, their potent leader, to his side,
 From whose relation he might learn the fate
 Of his lost followers in the last dread fight.
 The chief with lowly act decent approach'd,
 And stretching forth his spear, (the signal wont
 Of due obedience) touch'd the Monarch's shield.
 Then to the King's enquiry told direct,
 That while the Pagans in one whelming mass
 Bore down all obstacle, this noble band
 In the right wing had borne their fiercest rage,
 Nor yielded, till, by foes half compass'd round,
 They turn'd, still fighting as they slow retir'd.—
 The Sov'reign to his modest tale, with looks
 Of confidence and words of grateful praise,
 Answer'd, much sooth'd in thought, as in his mind
 Calm he revolv'd their multitudinous strength,
 And the known valour of th' experienc'd chief.

Him past, approaching next the Monarch sees
 Herbert, the ducal chief of warriors, pride
 Of Dorset's plains. Touch'd with a solemn awe,
 He mark'd the vet'ran chief, whose temp'rate skill
 And steady discipline in desp'rate fields
 Full oft had wrested vict'ry, when he fought
 In bloody wars of the departed Kings,
 Alfred's lov'd sire and brothers. As he came,
 The King in reverence unhelm'd his brows,
 Bending submissive tow'rd the honour'd man.
 Him well the Monarch knew, valiant and good,
 Knew his heart mild, but patient and serene

In hottest fight. The venerable chief
 Was pleas'd, and on his haughty courser soon
 Meekly respectful mov'd. No chieftain more
 Enjoy'd his followers' love, who now advanc'd
 In martial ranks of chivalry, a train
 Not num'rous less of potent Thanes, or bards,
 Or valiant men; nor wanting costly arms
 Less splendid than the noble legion pass'd.
 These, as they went, fix'd full their sparkling eyes
 On the lov'd King; scarce to their hearts less dear
 Than their own Herbert, for whose valued life
 Each warrior's heart beat prompt to yield its own:
 To whom each man was grateful for mild acts
 Of gen'rous favour. All well knew his home
 Spread ope its hospitable doors, and gave
 To each brave guest a welcome; with high feasts
 Cheerful regal'd, the noble chieftain's pride,
 His followers' meed. Oft'er no chief bestow'd
 On the deserving brave th' ennobling gift,
 Or of the war-horse, spear, or plum'd cuirass;
 Hence raising whom he lov'd, to the proud name
 And rights of pow'rful Thane, by all rever'd.
 Nor then delay long interven'd, before
 From the prompt notice of the watchful King
 He won like gifts, th' exalted warrior's boast,
 Proudest and highest; valour's dear-sought prize.
 His total legion pass'd, the King receives
 To closer interview the vet'ran chief,
 Who soon, (th' accus'tom'd sign of fealty paid,)
 Pious, but with garrulity of age,

Book

II.

V. 72—107.

Tells his firm trust, that Heav'n will soon avenge
 The Pagans' murd'rous guilt and perjur'd fraud;
 While the tried valour of the English host
 Shall sure prevail. Alfred yields pleas'd assent
 And willing thanks for these consoling words,
 And to his eager questions soon obtains
 Intelligent reply,—that near their chief
 Long his assaulted legion firmly stood
 The battle's fiercest rage, in whose uproar
 Warriors lamented fell, noble and brave,
 Nor few: compell'd at last to yield, and leave
 O'erwhelm'd in dismal rout, the ruinous camp:
 But num'rous still, and brave, his train surviv'd.—
 This heard, in thought absorb'd awhile, the King
 Earnest revolv'd how soonest to recruit
 Each legion's loss; much from th' exerted pow'r
 Hoping of Herbert, calm and wise.

BOOK
 II.

V. 108—136.

Then him
 Gently dismiss'd, he marks, full near advanc'd,
 Osmund, the ducal chief of Cornwall's pow'rs,
 Known by his noble mien, nor less discern'd
 By the high-banner'd horse, and eagle shield.
 Mournful the hero pass'd, his thoughtful looks
 Fix'd solemn on the ground, nor without cause
 Absorb'd in grief; for 'mid his princely train,
 As on they came, moving in martial state,
 (Dreadfully lessen'd) was discern'd the band
 Of Athelard, high Thane, Osmund's lov'd son,
 Reft of its Leader. Gash'd with frightful wounds,
 Slow pac'd the steeds, and in each warrior's look,

Pallid and sad, the gloom of sorrow hung.
 Of their own state unconscious, with fatigue
 Worn, and their mailed armour grimly dash'd
 With blood and toilsome sweat, and many a dint
 Of battle. Sole upon their chieftain lost
 They ponder'd, heart-oppress'd; for he was dear
 To ev'ry soldier; gallant, bold in fight;
 Kind to his train; obedient to his sire;
 Pious; and loyal to his Sov'reign King.
 Bards, as they mov'd, revolv'd his noble deeds,
 Sighing, and fram'd in thought the funeral song
 To grace his obsequies, and lift his name,
 Boast and example to the sons of war!
 Nor did not soon the watchful King perceive
 The mournful loss, deep-mov'd. Sad sympathy
 Hung on his clouded brow, as slow the host
 Mov'd silent on with looks of fix'd regret.
 Eagerly to his side the Monarch calls
 The much-lov'd father, from his lips to hear
 The dismal tidings. Twice the sire essay'd
 To speak, ere grief would yield him utterance: then
 Falt'ring he tells—his son, with noble rage,
 Had, in the left, twice turn'd the tide of war,
 Rushing impetuous on th' assailable foe,
 And dar'd all danger; but too sad a fate
 Such gallant virtue met; for soon inclos'd,
 And like a lion baying his scar'd foes,
 His troops beheld him, while they yielding turn'd,
 Press'd by o'erwhelming numbers, nor again
 Saw ever their lov'd chief, living or dead.

Book
 II.

V. 138—147.

Vainly the trembling sire, with pious care,
 Had sought his body o'er the deathful field :
 Despairing now, he deem'd his tangled corse
 Lost in the general heap, and sorrowing pin'd
 As never more on his dear face to gaze.—
 The King was mov'd. Dear as the honour'd sire,
 Scarce in his love the son held second place.
 No youthful chieftain more his warm esteem
 Possess'd, or dearer to his heart surviv'd
 Thro' all the host. Breathing the words resign'd
 Of manly patience, to the father's grief
 He lent consoling balm; but as he spoke,
 Graceful a tear of mild regret bedew'd
 The Sov'reign's cheek, which (turning from the view)
 Soft his uplifted hand dispers'd away.

Book

II.

V. 168—196.

Edric came next, whose ducal reign controll'd
 The fertile vale of Berks, numerous in men
 And steeds, adapt for war. Their stately ranks
 Follow'd the martial chief, as proud he rode
 With venerable aspect, old in arms.
 Under his dark-check'd helmet curling hung
 His locks, once streaming brown, now silvery grey,
 Bespeaking rev'rence: easy-soul'd and good;
 The Monarch knew him; brave, but of his own,
 And whom his proper favour rais'd to note,
 Partially fond, nor e'er suspecting ill.
 Amid his train, not distant, shone behind
 The gaudy banner of the youthful chief,
 Hianfrid, glorying in his graceful form.

Him had the childless Edric's kind regard
 Adopted as his son, nor aught deny'd
 That growing vanity from earliest youth
 Sought or could wish. Often his fav'rite boy
 Would he equip in arms, and pleas'd survey
 With looks of fond delight and anxious hope.
 Now with the confidence of love, the chief
 Himself in age declining, to his rule,
 With pow'r of ducal Thane, a martial host
 Resign'd: himself at last in rural ease
 Hoping to die, worn with the toils of war.
 Now far conspicuous, on his prancing steed
 Richly caparison'd, Hianfrid came,
 Studious of shew, and eager to obtain
 The gaze of admiration. His broad shield
 Glittering with gold profuse, and painted o'er
 With bold devices, (tho' as yet no deed
 Of signal valour sanction'd such display,)
 Borne by the artful Thane on outstretch'd arm,
 Hid not his costly armour, dazzling bright;
 While from his plumed casque, where crested shone,
 With outspread wings, an eaglet, bending prone
 T' o'erlook his roseate cheeks; streaming in waves
 His dark locks floated on the wanton gales.
 Often he turn'd, and on his following train
 Look'd back, as on they mov'd—a glorious throng,
 Their radiant breast-plates flaming as of gold.
 Each his broad falchion glitt'ring at his side
 Wore ostentatious, and his burnish'd spear
 Wav'd, tipp'd with gold. Bedeck'd with crimson plumes,

Book
 II.

V. 197-226.

Their nodding helmets mov'd with gaudy pomp,
 Tinging with roseate gleam their polish'd mail :
 As when amid his train of western clouds,
 The redden'd sun, fading in distance, sheds
 A purple splendor on the sparkling waves.
 Next, with the noble Edric's princely train,
 After Hianfrid, came, of manlier mien,
 Harold, his youthful friend, whose num'rous train
 Follow'd, in arms less splendid, but with hearts
 Not less courageous than the troops they join'd.
 Born in contiguous vales, the rising chiefs
 Early had been companions; for the sire
 Of noble Harold, in a pristine war,
 Slain bravely fighting, left his infant boy
 Yet hanging on his widow'd mother's breast.
 She pining died. Edric, the hero's friend,
 Receiv'd in charge his lands and vassal host ;
 And, (meest compeer for his adopted boy)
 Under the chieftain's hospitable roof
 Harold had spent his youth, till now matur'd
 He rush'd to war, wielding his father's spear.
 Thus had the manly youths, by Edric's care,
 Grown up together. Other learning none
 Known or desir'd; with title of High Thanes,
 Their mutual boast, joyful they led to war
 Their troops united. Strong was either host,
 Stronger by union. Their long intercourse
 Had made them friends, not rivals; for tho' glow'd
 In either heart an ardent thirst for fame,
 Yet Harold, more by deeds than outward pomp

Book
 II.

V. 227—256.

Sought for applause; less vain, haughty no less. **Book**
 The King survey'd them pleas'd; and soothing hope **II.**
 Suggested to his thought what future aid **V. 237—284**
 Might from their friendship spring; yet half a fear
 Chastis'd his confidence; for he had mark'd
 Hianfrid oft o'erbearing, selfish, proud!

The Monarch soon from Edric learns the fate
 Of his brave followers in the deathful field;
 And hears, disturb'd, Hianfrid's splendid band
 Early had fled, while Harold's long-endur'd
 The dire affray—stedfast, till whelming hosts
 Bore down, like torrents; yet the King receiv'd
 Gladly th' excusing pleas, by Edric told,
 Of closer conflict and unequal foes,
 Pressing the wing where rul'd his favorite boy.

These pass'd. Next, Alwin came, the ducal chief
 Of heroes, banded from the shadowy fields
 Of Wilts, in long array of warlike pomp
 Marshall'd, and moving on with sound of arms
 To harmony of music from soft flutes
 And mellow clarions blown a manly train.
 Alwin led on. Wielding his ponderous spear,
 Proudly he sat, exulting in his strength:
 While to the view scarce less in towering size
 Appear'd his throng of heroes, in bold deeds
 Foremost of daring enterprise. The King
 Joyful saw these, in number scarce impair'd;
 For well he knew their chieftain's eager soul

Ardent and rash : of calm consid'rate thought
 Disdainful oft, but prompt by gallant acts
 Of dauntless courage, to extort high fame
 And wond'ring awe, chill'd oft by anxious fear.
 Which noble band survey'd, soon to the King
 The chieftain tells of glorious deeds atchiev'd
 By his brave train, and points with smiling joy
 Their safer state, scarce lessen'd to the view.
 With these conjunct came half the num'rous host,
 Once by the haughty Kenwulph led to war.
 With mad ambition fir'd, he to be less
 Than King disdain'd; and rather than obey
 And serve a lawful Sov'reign, had preferr'd
 From the victorious Pagans to accept
 Nominal rule and titled shew of pow'r,
 Their vassal : and now held his wish'd-for reign
 In conquer'd Mercia. With him half his host,
 Lur'd by his trait'rous counsels and inflam'd
 To blind rebellion, from the common cause
 Seceding, had conjoin'd the faithless Danes.
 Yet some the call of duty had obey'd,
 Nor join'd th' apostate ruin. As they pass'd,
 The gen'rous Monarch eye'd their puissant ranks,
 Forgetful of all wrongs; and mark'd their bands,
 Most from the field of slaughter safe survive.

Follow'd the manly legion, whose broad limbs
 The plains of Somerset, rich in wide vales,
 Had nurs'd to strength. Before them splendid rode
 Rayner, their ducal head. Unmov'd and stern

VOL. I.

H

Book

II.

V. 285—315.

Appear'd his aspect; for within him prey'd
 Regret, continual since that hated day
 When swoln with proud ambition his lov'd friend,
 The dear companion of his happier hours,
 Kenwulph, unmov'd by honour's potent voice,
 Basely revolted from his country's cause,
 Tho' greeted ever by the royal love.
 Since had a serious, sullen gloom o'erhung
 His deep-stung friend; for save that fatal fault
 Of unrestrain'd ambition, he had found
 Kenwulph of nobler temper, kind and brave,
 Nor yet could mem'ry the lamented crime
 Cheerful retrace. Alfred th' unwelcome cause
 Knew of his solemn mood; knew Rayner's heart
 Glow'd with the love of virtue, and could boast
 Humane, ingenuous feelings, own'd by few.
 Loyal and brave, he rush'd in deathful fields,
 Where danger fiercest rag'd: by his proud train
 High-valued, winning by attractive deeds
 Their zealous love. Now pass'd the chieftain on,
 His shieldless arm hung idle by his side
 Enwapt in healing bands, whose folds conceal'd
 A ghastly wound, pierc'd by a Danish spear.
 Wan was his visage, and sedate he led
 In melancholy guise his shatter'd train.
 These pass'd, from Rayner soon the Monarch learns
 The sad relation of their dang'rous fight;
 And, fill'd with gen'rous pity, hears alarm'd
 The loss of many a warrior-chief, whose place
 The choice of future fields shall ill repair.

Book
 II.

V. 314—343.

Last, came the legion from the blooming hills
 Of verd'rous Hants, and from their pleasant homes
 In Vecta's isle, whose health-diffusing shores
 The ocean laves enamour'd. As they mov'd,
 The King saw griev'd their thinner ranks had borne
 Loss, num'rous more than all the pow'rs yet past.
 Arous'd to fear, with eager gaze he sought
 Siward, their ducal chieftain, wont to guide
 His train with skill peculiar. Him in vain
 The King explor'd. With fix'd surprise he saw
 Advancing in his place, a warrior-form,
 Not undistinguish'd yet by valourous deeds,
 A young, but gallant Thane,—on whose flush'd cheeks
 Play'd a suffusive blush, while soft his mien,
 Mingled with modesty, regret, and awe,
 Spoke the keen movements of his troubled soul.
 Edgar was nam'd the chief. One sire he claim'd
 With the brave hero whose proud host he led.
 Each valiant chief the beauteous Emma bore
 To noble Morcar, pride of Vecta's vales.
 Each of the widow'd matron was the hope
 And dearest solace. Oft with humid eyes
 She by their side had sat, and fond retrac'd
 The father's image in each manly form :
 But one no more her longing eyes shall see,
 Nor ever more her tender-clasping arms
 Welcome returning to his native vale.
 For in the last terrific midnight war,
 O'erpow'r'd by numbers, gash'd with many a wound,
 While by his side the gallant Edgar fought,

Book
 II.

V. 344—373.

(Ah! death deep-mourn'd!) the noble Siward fell.
 Then had shone forth, in all its terrors seen,
 A brother's pious fury. Grief, revenge,
 Despair, inflam'd at once young Edgar's heart.
 Singly he darted 'mid the thickest fight,
 Of death disdainful—and while scalding tears
 Burst from his eyes, he like a whirlwind rag'd
 Resistless far and wide: where'er he rush'd
 Death mark'd his blasting course: thro' solid ranks
 He open'd broad his way, while his scar'd troops
 Follow'd, expecting that one horrid fate
 Should overwhelm each gallant brother; but his zeal
 Sav'd from the Pagan grasp the lifeless corse
 Of the lov'd Siward; difficultly borne
 From shameless insult off the bloody field.
 Since had the pious Edgar the remains
 Of his lost brother to a shelter'd spot
 Mournfully led, where by a well-known brook
 Hasty dispos'd, unburied yet it lay,
 Waiting due obsequies from living friends.—
 Now the sad remnant of that brother's host,
 Edgar led on: slow pass'd the train; for wounds
 Oppress'd their wearied limbs. Soon to himself
 The King invokes the chief, and from him hears,
 Struck with keen anguish, the heart-rending tale
 By Edgar with meek tenderness reveal'd;
 But of the wonders his own arm achiev'd,
 Nothing elate, or conscious; sole in heart
 Sorrowing that all his pow'r had not avail'd
 To save a brother from the stroke of death.

Book

II.

V. 374—403.

The King, to pity mov'd and grateful sense
 Of Edgar's merit, bade with graceful act
 The youthful warrior take, as ducal chief,
 Command supreme of all the num'rous host,
 Whom late his valiant brother led to war.
 Proud honour! yet by all the host receiv'd
 With joyful vote, deem'd worthiest to supply
 Their much-lov'd Siward's place. Bards mark'd the youth
 Witnesses of his valour, and prepar'd
 To sing at festive boards his bold exploits.

Book
 II.

V. 404—434.

Pass'd all the pow'rs of Wessex, as the King
 Studios had scann'd the various-lesse'n'd troops,
 So much in force impair'd, (alas! before,
 To meet so numerous, so fierce a foe
 Unequal) vain he deem'd the fonder hope
 With purpos'd vengeance, rashly to pursue
 The murd'rous Pagans: vain th' attempt, to dare
 With inefficient strength a lawless foe,
 Flush'd and elate with conquest. Much his soul
 Sorrow'd, presaging what a train of woes
 England must suffer, ere her loyal sons
 Could work her peace; yet prompt in thought revolv'd
 How best with speedy and augmented pow'rs
 To march to battle, and by fields of war
 To end the Danish ravages.

His thoughts

Eager to open, and to hear if aught
 Of wiser counsel prudence could suggest,
 Round to the various bands the Monarch sends

His waiting heralds, with this embassy
 Charg'd to each chieftain of the legion'd pow'rs.
 "First, o'er the field of death the host will pay
 "Due rites of sepulchre to those brave men.
 "Fall'n in their country's cause: chiefs will repair
 "Where the lamented Siward's lifeless form
 "Unburied lies: afterward will attend
 "Council of import in the royal tent."

Book
 II.

V. 433—461.

Strait o'er the sunny champaign mournful moves
 Array'd, the host, led by their several chiefs
 On tow'rd the fatal field, where lie confus'd
 Th' unburied relics of the dead. Here soon
 Busied were all in varied offices,
 And wonted rites sepulchral, that the camp
 And gory field contiguous, offer now
 To the relenting eye a solemn scene.
 On every side, o'er all the moving plain,
 Warriors and female forms, with tender care,
 Frame for their fallen friends the narrow homes,
 Last debt of piety! Some bear along,
 High-rais'd on hollow shields, (the bier of war)
 The wounded dead. Others with toil collect
 Huge stones and earthy portions, whence to raise
 The hilly mounds, which, o'er their comrades dear
 Heap'd num'rous, may display to future times
 The field of former slaughter. Thus, while round
 Soft in their earthy beds the living lay
 The warriors fall'n, and by their side dispose,
 As wont, the spear and shield, the solemn priests,

In flowing garments habited, pass slow
 On ev'ry hand, and to departed souls
 Invoke almighty grace. The bards tune soft
 Their tend'red harps, and raise the fervent dirge,
 And hymns of grief, praising the brave and good,
 Now lost; but not eternally: for still
 In blissful climes of peace the good shall meet
 Friends dearest lov'd, and clasp their angel forms
 In undisturb'd embrace. Full many form
 On monumental stones inscriptions rude,
 Recordant of a name, or some high deed
 Worthy from sons of after-times to share
 The meed of glory and undying fame.—
 Soft-breath'd, a sound of music and still song
 Steals on the ear, from all the tranced field,
 Confus'd with murmur faint of hush'd lament.

Book

II.

V. 462—490.

The King, attended by his num'rous chiefs
 Moves rev'rent o'er the plain, and of the dead
 Listens the praise, oft to the wild regret
 Of the fond relatives yielding kind balm
 Of soothing words, with promise that ere long
 They shall avenge these insults, and shall free
 England from all her suffrings. On they pass,
 Grateful survey'd by all, with eyes that beam'd
 Confident hope; and now arrive the place,
 Where many potent Thanes and noble chiefs,
 Assembled, spoke not distant far the corse
 Of the regretted Siward. Hither come,
 In station'd order, all his warlike train

To grace his obsequies. The Chiefs give place,
 While Edgar, lowly bending, of the dead,
 In gory arms stretch'd pallid on the ground,
 Now takes a last adieu, and on his lips
 Imprints a ling'ring kiss, and silent clasps
 The clay-cold form.—Sympathy melts each heart.
 Low in th' appointed spot his followers place
 The hero dead, and near him careful fix
 Shield, spear, and massy battle-axe, and sword.—
 Now solemn stillness reigns, while ev'ry man,
 To honour the lov'd chieftain, in his shield
 Bears a small turf of earth, to form the mound,
 Memorial of the place: and soon appears
 A hill, firm rais'd, which round with massive stones
 Compassing they secure—a lasting guard!
 Sighing as thus they close their chief's remains,
 And tell his merits.

To the pensive King
 The bards approach, and rev'rently to him
 Resign the harp, as worthiest and best skill'd,
 Acknowledg'd prince of bards, to celebrate
 The praise of Siward fall'n. Mild he receives
 Th' attuned symphony, while eager bend
 The thronging chieftains, in their open'd looks
 Pleas'd expectation beaming, and each heart
 High-throbbing, conscious that shall kindred fate
 Lay low their limbs, their cold remains shall meet
 Like honour; in the sight of tender friends
 Mourn'd by a royal bard, and to proud fame
 Rais'd eminent. The regal minstrel soon,

Book
 II.

V. 401—492

Uplooking solemn, strikes with practis'd hand
 (Fonder employment of his early youth)
 The mellow'd strings, while thus his swelling voice
 Pours on the list'ning ear the funeral song.

Book
 II.

V. 531—549.

“ Soul of departed Siward ! whose cold limbs,
 Pierc'd with proud wounds, sighing we yield to earth,
 Look from thy high abode, and hear thy fame
 Told by surviving friends, to thee once dear.
 Ah ! lost to us too soon, translated spirit !
 Noble has been thy nature, bold in war,
 Kind to thy friends, who grieve thy loss with tears ;
 Merciful ever to the fallen foe,
 And gen'rous. Thou art gone : but we thy worth
 Shall still remember with regret unchang'd.
 Example high to all, haughty defence
 Of thy afflicted country, to the foe
 Terrible ; thou, with arm of pow'r, wast wont
 To chase the flying ranks in bloody fields
 Of fight, as from the dark-wing'd tempest fly
 The light ships, wreck'd along the surging main.
 Thy meteor-falchion in thy lifted hand
 Blazing, before thy mighty, dreadful form,
 Legions retir'd—as crowd the fowls of air,
 Reeling in terror from the sable sky,
 Pregnant with thunder. Underneath thy stroke
 They fell, with such resistless force as hurls
 The rock-built castles, when all loos'd to rage
 Thro' the mid sky impetuous whirlwinds sound,
 Which, casting from the base their awful bulk,

With ruinous tumult fill the starting vales.
 But to the conquer'd, mild; thy soften'd soul.
 Mercy diffus'd around, as sheds the sun
 His meeken'd beams, and cheers the weeping fields,
 Desolate by the storm. Tho' gone, thy name
 Is ever fresh among us; and when we,
 Thy friends, compeers in war, alike shall feel
 Death's chilling hand, and shall like thee be hid
 In dark and narrow tombs, even when moss
 Has cloth'd our turfy beds, warriors unborn
 And long posterity shall grateful sing
 Thy praises. Future bards shall oft repeat
 Thy fame, transmitted fond from mouth to mouth,
 While ever it remains the proud delight
 Of heroes, emulous, to know and teach
 Songs of past valour. Fathers to their sons
 Shall tell thy virtues, till their young hearts beat
 To die like thee. This sacred place full oft
 Fond they shall visit, straying 'mid these tombs,
 And think on those who for their country fell.
 This mound with awe peculiar they shall point,
 And sighing tell, "Here noble Siward lies."
 Farewell, great spirit; rest in honour; known
 By all the brave and good to latest times.
 For bards to future memory give alone
 The good and valiant. None can praise the base:
 They die, to dark oblivion doom'd: if nam'd,
 Scorn starts and frowns. But when the good man dies,
 What is in death his constant soul should fear?—
 Sole for those tender friends his bosom feels,

Book

II.

V. 530—579.

Left to bewail his loss. But for himself, Book 7
 His soul, from all the cares, and strifes, and toils, Il.
 Freed of this lower world, and 'scap'd at last V. 190-200
 From this her fleshly shell and house of clay, VI. 100-110
 Which bind her pow'rs to earth, now sudden feels, VII. 100-110
 Restrain'd no more, in boundless vast extent, VIII. 100-110
 Her own immortal nature, capable IX. 100-110
 In adoration rapt and blissful sense X. 100-110
 To roam creation through, and led by spirits, XI. 100-110
 Good as herself, inmates of heav'n, to pierce XII. 100-110
 God's everlasting secrets, and partake XIII. 100-110
 Joys unconceiv'd, happiness without end XIV. 100-110
 Yet tho' exalted thus the parted soul, XV. 100-110
 We here are left but men;—our souls as yet XVI. 100-110
 To bodies link'd:—let us then act like men, XVII. 100-110
 Nor to give way disdain to Nature's fond, XVIII. 100-110
 Ingenuous feelings, and decorous grief: XIX. 100-110
 But while thus left on this our younger home, XX. 100-110
 Probationary, strive with care to act, XXI. 100-110
 A good and honest part, and each man well XXII. 100-110
 Perform his proper duty, not unknown, XXIII. 100-110
 Strongly to ev'ry man by conscience told, XXIV. 100-110
 And graciously to men reveal'd from heav'n."

This sung, the Monarch to the listening bards
 In pensive admiration rapt, restores
 The trembling harp, and as he goes, adjoints
 These monitory words:
 "Bards, on the tomb
 Inscribe the hero's name. Be it your care

To celebrate in song his manly deeds.
 And who for such renown would shrink from death?
 For you, ye sacred train, fav'rites of heav'n,
 Honour'd by all; to you the task divine
 Is giv'n, the human mind by your mild arts
 To polish and refine, and thro' the mean
 Of charming melody, warm in the heart
 To plant the seeds of knowledge, virtue, truth,
 Among a happy people, open'd then
 To those best charms of peace, of useful arts,
 And all the sweet delights of social home.
 Ah! could we speedy end the dismal woes
 Of our distracted country, freed at last
 From these fierce foes, then might our better thoughts
 Turn to these genial themes, this blest employ,
 To spread the stores of science, and diffuse
 The spirit calm of cheerful industry,
 Commerce, and order. Prospect to my soul
 How dear! But, no! th' enchanting vision now
 Recedes, and cannot be. Far other scenes
 Compass us now: all our united thoughts
 Henceforth must center on the bloody field."

Book
 II.

V. 600—637.

Rev'rent approach the venerable priests,
 And o'er the high-rai'd tomb, decent perform
 Religion's wonted rites. Chief among these
 Conspicuous stood, Asser, the favour'd friend
 Of learning, from Saint David's distant shrine
 Nor was not there Plegmond, Arch-Governor
 Of Canterbury's see, nor Grimbold, prime

In graceful science, from politer France.
 And there, surpassing most, in piety
 And zeal to propagate Christ's holy faith,
 Counsellor prime of Alfred's earlier youth,
 Adulph Saint Neod stood, of kingly race,
 The Monarch's kinsman. He the solemn mass
 Rais'd high, and fervent pour'd th' affecting pray'r
 For the departed chief. Sighs from each breast
 Spoke its warm sorrow. To the King the chiefs
 Yield grateful honour for those moving strains,
 Tenderly soothing the disburthen'd heart.
 He other cares bids now employ their souls,
 And to the summon'd council thoughtful speed;—
 That soon all haste to quit the field of grief.
 While Alfred to his side attentive calls
 Osmund, his lov'd associate, whose mild heart
 Affectionate he knew, and to the charms
 Of polish'd learning (by the Monarch's soul
 Treasure dear-priz'd) awake. Friendly the King,
 Tow'rd the wont council, Osmund by his side,
 Moves with meek grace; full many Chiefs and Thanes
 Attendant round. The Sov'reign to the sire
 Yields consolation for his absent son,
 Which to th' afflicted Hero some faint ray
 Inspires of dubious hope. And now their steps
 Have reach'd the spot rever'd, where splendid fly
 The plummy tufas, of the royal tent
 Conspicuous signals. Soon the clarions shrill
 And din of trumpets thro' the conscious camp
 Echo, as wont, the sign of high consult.

Awaiting here the King, heralds appear,
 Each from his charge return'd, by him dispatch'd
 After the battle's rage to mark the route
 Of the retiring foe, and in the port
 By Wareham's crowded shore, to view the state
 Of their full fleet, if left in order mann'd,
 And prompt to sail, or what diverse intent
 Seem'd likeliest. To the King himself advanc'd,
 Each with meek act his embassy reveals.

Boon:

II.

~~V. 664—666.~~

All enter now within the dome superb,
 Brilliant throughout with shine of lucent lamps,
 Thrown from the gold-bright roof in pendent range.
 The num'rous Chieftains, Thanes, and Bishops take
 Wont stations. Reverential silence reigns.
 High at the far extreme the Monarch sat,
 Under a fretted canopy, whence hung,
 Falling in graceful folds, rich tapestry
 Splendid of silk and gold, where female hands
 Had wrought the pictur'd tales of pristine wars.
 Rising with graceful act, the Monarch soon
 His prejudg'd counsel thoughtfully declar'd.

"Peers, Chiefs, since now with sorrow we have seen
 The losses of our host, our prime concern,
 Or ere avenging arms can hope to save
 Our suff'ring country, must be deem'd, that loss
 With adequate supply best to repair.
 Brave as I know you all, and brave the host,
 Yet vain, alas! your gen'rous zeal would prove,
 Should we, presumptuous, dare our lesser force,

Enfeebled as we see, now to oppose
 Against the thousands whom the swarming North
 Pours from her icy mountains on our plains,
 Increasing still, fierce as the howling wolves
 That prowl her deserts, and to madness driv'n
 With fancied triumph. 'Twere a grievous crime
 That high intrepid valour, which disdains
 The deadliest danger, rashly to expose
 To sure destruction. No, my noble friends!
 Your country eyes you with a trembling hope,
 Sav'd but by you, her last, her only shield.
 How soonest from each province to convoke
 A force more equal to the hostile pow'rs,
 Thus I advise. Hence let each ducal chief,
 Departing, seek the plains that own his sway,
 None distant far; and there with active skill
 Summon all freemen, whose selected strength
 Best suits the field of arms, to join the war.
 There by his presence and his heart'ning voice
 Dispense a courage ardent as his own,
 Till the whole land, by indignation rous'd,
 Shall catch the gen'rous flame: and her best sons
 With emulous impatience rush to arms.
 Each chief returning with collected pow'rs
 Ere some near day, which our concerting thoughts
 Shall judge most meet, hence will we march conjunct
 T' assail with surer hope th' innum'rous foe,
 Who now (so heralds certain tidings bring)
 Bends toward Exham's walls his furious steps,
 Intending there to found a settled home,

Book
 II.

V. 697—796.

And spoil for sustenance the country round.
 Then will we dare whatever form of fate
 Fell danger can oppose: then full exert
 Each his indignant valour, firm, unmov'd,
 Fearless of numbers; nor, howe'er unmatch'd,
 Despair, or fail at last, of victory.
 So, when at length by battles hardly won,
 We conquer the fierce foe,—then may our thoughts
 Turn to improve our country, and by arts
 Of gentler kind, compose her to calm bliss.
 Then for my people, children of my care,
 Dear source and end of all my hopes and toils,
 We may behold, in lieu of horrid wars,
 Quiet restor'd, to ev'ry man secur'd
 The tranquil comforts of endearing home;
 Order establish'd; th' intersected realm
 Into known bound'ries parted; and all ranks
 Link'd in one social chain, that equal laws
 Promulg'd and executed, may dispense
 Justice at each man's door, and may defend
 To each his right; each of his neighbour's weal
 And conduct watchful, knowing himself bound
 Pledge for his fellow's industry, and faith,
 And gen'ral life. Arts, science shall approach,
 Op'ning the human mind, as spreads the bud,
 Matur'd by summer suns. Cities shall rise
 Majestic o'er our plains, and frequent-rear'd
 Castles to guard their wealth. Commerce shall send
 Her ample burdens to each foreign clime,
 Where Eastern India spreads her spicy stores,

Book
 II.

V. 737—756

Or Northern oceans lave their icy realms
'Mid shores yet unexplor'd, by our bold prow
Soon to be pierc'd and known. Navies shall ride
August our circling seas, and guard our isle,
Admiring Europe's boast, pride of the world!
While o'er our cultur'd fields Plenty shall wave
Her richest stores, provoking Industry
Thro' every breast. Religion's ministers,
Honour'd and copied in their decent lives,
Shall breathe heaven's tidings of good-will, and peace,
And joy among mankind; to the Supreme,
(As is most just) glory and grateful praise.
Till o'er the wond'ring realm, from end to end,
One active face of labour and of art
Shall spread benign and bless the smiling land,
Rais'd to high dignity of wealth and pow'r,
And polish'd manners, mild-uniting all,
While each man under his own roof secure,
With his own family, shall long enjoy
Peace and domestic happiness. Oh! scenes,
Rapturous to my fancy as the hours
Of bliss in heav'n! These future must become
Our thought, our daily hope, our ceaseless aim."

Book
IL

v. 171—185.

He ended; and delighted gratitude
Echo'd around the tumult of applause:
While smiles and looks intent, with awe sublim'd,
Thro' all the deep-mov'd synod told the heart;
Till tall-uprising, his less thoughtful mind,
Alwin, with quick impatience thus propos'd.

VOL. I.

K

“ Rev’reut, my noble peers, to you I ope
 My wishful purpose: let not then my thoughts
 Offend, tho’ not obey’d. I know the pow’rs
 Of our proud enemy in number much
 Exceed our own; in valour, as I trust,
 Nothing—but far our second; by so much
 Inferior here, that still I count their strength
 Only as match’d—superior I disclaim.
 Therefore what hinders that we instant march,
 Victory undelay’d by fight to gain,
 Scorning new aids, nor lose the proud renown
 And glory, wanting to more equal fields.”—

Book
 II.

V. 786—813.

Sternly he sat, and opposite him rose
 The venerable Herbert; calm, sedate,
 Majestic were his looks: his hoary hair
 Flow’d o’er his paler cheeks, as forward bent
 Leaning he rested on his pond’rous spear.
 A sudden rev’reuce thrill’d thro’ Alwin’s heart,
 As on himself he mark’d the eyes affix’d
 Of the grave vet’ran, who his sober thoughts
 To him address’d with words of sage reproof.

“ Restrain, impetuous chief, thy hasty rage
 And undigested counsel, and revere
 The prudent foresight of maturer thought.
 Haughty and bold! th’ emotions of thy heart
 Learn to controul, and patient judge awhile,
 Weighing with modest deference. Prudence, still.
 Remember, is true valour’s solid base.

Say, should we now thy wish'd advice pursue,
 What other could be deem'd the desp'rate deed,
 Than mad to rush upon a yawning gulf.
 In vain our ruin'd land should then deplore
 Her brave defenders lost, and look around
 Anxious for new supplies; her other realms
 Now all subdued; our's her sole guardian pow'r;
 Our's then must fall the last sad sacrifice,
 And England's sons must evermore be slaves!
 Hence be that dreadful thought! No, valiant peers;
 Trust me, the counsel of our noble prince
 None can improve. There wisdom joins, as wont,
 Her temper'd beam with valour's ardent fire.
 Nought need we fear to trust us to the guide
 Of those great talents, which, with lofty eye,
 O'erlook each scene, and mark its utmost end.
 Let us obey then, and prepare to part
 Each for his proper plains, assembling there
 Our brave adherents to fresh war. The time
 Demands our readiest speed. Let all our thoughts
 Now center on the coming enterprize."

Book
 II.

V. 814-842.

He spoke, and to the list'ning synod pleas'd
 His words discreet. Applause gave full assent,
 While on the Monarch and the vet'ran chief
 All rev'rent gaz'd. Which seen, the Monarch rose
 To sum in brief the council's fix'd result—
 When, lo! wide-bursting, open fly the doors
 Of the full tent, and, rushing to the midst,
 Soldiers appear, who tow'rd the Monarch lead

Strangers in priestly habits. Heard without
 Instant a roar of shouts and clashing shields
 Stuns the dash'd ear. Rise from their seats the chiefs
 Amaz'd. Immediate asks the King, unmov'd,
 The cause of this strange tumult. To him soon
 Answer'd the soldiers.

Book
 II.

V. 843—871.

“ Pardon, noble prince,
 The zeal of dang'rous tidings. As we stray'd,
 Late at the camp's extreme, surpriz'd we saw
 Thick-rolling clouds of dust enlarging rise
 Plain o'er the hill—thro' which, distinguish'd soon,
 Crowds gleam'd of men, and steeds, in throngs that seem'd
 Approaching tow'rd the camp. Ere long we mark'd,
 Advanc'd full near, before the rest, a train
 On flying coursers hasting to the tents,
 Seeming as heralds charg'd with some emprise.
 Arriving soon, these venerable priests
 Accosted us, and eagerly requir'd
 Before the Monarch to be led, to him
 The purport of their message to reveal.”

Now led before the throne, the priestly train
 With decent mien before the Monarch bow,
 Humble; when solemn thus the foremost spoke.
 “ Hail, gracious Sov'reign! deem not that the crowds
 Who seek in populous throng thy shelt'ring camp
 Are enemies: both we and who approach
 Are friends and subjects. Doubting lest the camp
 Might judge them foes, we charg'd have left their ranks
 T' explain their coming. Miserable news

Await thine ear. Alas, for England!—lost,
For ever lost! Heav'n, with our crimes incens'd,
Dooms to destruction our devoted land."

Book
II.

V. 872—899.

Falt'ring he paus'd. To him, with voice compos'd,
The King:—"Whatever be thy dismal charge,
Speak out: a brave man knows not to despair."

The priest then answer'd:—"While the dreadful fame
Of Alfred's routed powers, and leagues of peace
Violate, o'er th' astonish'd country flies,
The trait'rous Kenwulph of his Mercian train
Has suddenly conven'd a host immense,
And now o'erspreading far the ravag'd land,
They enter Wessex, with intent to join
By Exham's fated walls th' innumerable foe.
Before their furious march, in panic fear
Fly all the wretched habitants, who fill
The tract they threat to cross, in crowded mass.
Left to the ruin of th' approaching foe
The whole dispeopled land, their emptied homes,
And fields half-cultur'd. Hither bends their course,
To thee they fly for shelter and for life:—
Impatient hasting tow'rd this camp, their sole
Asylum.—And the Danes who bend their march
Tow'rd Exham's walls, with carnage mark their steps,
One hideous path of ruin! Bursting fierce,
Broad sabres gleaming in their hands, the doors
Of ev'ry mansion, plunder, lawless spoil
Suffice not; but with mad insatiate rage,

They scatter o'er the land resistless fires:
 Towns, villages are wrapt in flames! in crowds
 Fly the scar'd natives from their burning homes,
 While the fell murd'ers with uplifted swords
 Or gory axes, thro' the streaming streets
 Lay them defenceless, or pursue their flight!
 Sad shrieks of agony, groans of distress,
 In horrid discord fill the lurid air!
 Ruin on ruin threatens the reeking land!
 Just GOD, forsake us not! What mortal pow'r,
 What but thine own almighty arm can save
 From terrors such as these, far worse than death!"

Book

II.

V. 900—927.

He ceas'd: while o'er his venerable cheeks
 Roll'd the big-gushing tears. The chiefs, inflam'd
 To tenfold indignation, burn to meet
 The trait'rous Kenwulph. Grief and pity rend
 Their gen'rous bosoms, with their country's woes
 Heart-struck. Revenge upon the cruel Danes
 Fills ev'ry soul. Eagerly they demand
 That instant may be fix'd the wish'd-for day,
 When all return'd with new-assembled aids
 May march to battle. Then the Monarch thus.

"How swells my bosom, when I see your souls
 Fir'd with new courage, as new dangers rise!
 Leading such spirits, tho' the Danish host,
 Leagu'd with unhappy Kenwulph's rebel pow'rs,
 Tripled in number met, nought would I doubt
 Of vict'ry. No, my chiefs! the day shall come

When your impatient valour shall enjoy
 Battle and full reward. To-morrow's dawn
 Shall speed each ducal chief to band new aids
 On his own plains. These chos'n, let him conduct
 Back to our camp his full-assembled train;
 That ere the fifth day closes, we may hail
 The last return'd. So the sixth morning's sun
 Proudly shall view our eager banners wave,
 Marching to save from misery and death
 Our long-insulted country,—to atchieve
 Triumph, and glory, liberty, and peace.
 Meanwhile a band of seamen to our fleet
 Escorted, shall adapt our naval powers,
 To meet in battailous array the foe,
 Prompt now, with all their num'rous ships, to part
 From hence (so heralds certain tidings bring).
 Tow'rd Exham's shores.—But now occasion bids
 That kind we meet these miserable crowds
 Approaching, and within our shelt'ring camp
 Dispose them safe. This done, as long fatigue
 Since midnight's dismal hour has worn our limbs
 That need refreshment, and the shades of eve
 Mind us of rest, within this spacious tent
 Meet we ere long to share the genial feast,
 When wine, and songs of bards, and converse sweet,
 Shall sooth fatigue, and heal the toils of war,
 Till th' hour of sleep arrive, and lap our frames
 In strong repose, fitting the new-brac'd limbs
 Vig'rous to part ere the first morning shine."

This said, the council strait the King dissolves,

Book

II.

V. 928—937.

And, from his throne descending, thro' the midst
 Passes, while all th' uprising chiefs his steps
 Follow commov'd, and thro' the thronging camp
 Disperse with haste, till at the far extreme
 Arriv'd, they view, beyond the subject vale,
 The crowds immense, yet pouring o'er the plains,
 Disorder'd; while, deep-echoing, various sounds
 Swell in the burden'd gales. Soon o'er the vale
 Their num'rous van advancing, shouts of joy
 Gratulant rise from all the spreading throng,
 Ev'n to their fainter rear, glad to behold
 Their shelter within view.—As when a fleet,
 Homeward returning from the isles of Ind,
 Escap'd at last from rocks, and shoals, and storms,
 Pours o'er its decks the crowding mariners,
 Hailing with shouts that drown the surges' roar
 The gleaming prospect of their native shores.

BOOK

II.

V. 958—965.

And now the multitudinous populace
 Reach full the camp, and with th' enquiring host
 Hold answering converse, that the mingling noise
 Of thousand voices murmurs o'er the plain;
 While near th' attentive Monarch eager throng
 Grey venerable sires, and hoary priests,
 Peasants and citizens, and comely youths,
 And beauteous females, bearing in their arms,
 Or leading by the hand, their helpless babes.
 Pale with fatigue were all, and many pierc'd
 With painful wounds, dealt by th' infuriate foe.
 All fondly gaze, tears swelling to their eyes,

On the lov'd King, and grateful blessings pour
 On him their sole defence, their only hope.
 Their sad laments the King with pity hears,
 Revolving unappall'd his country's woes;
 Then strait commands his host the exil'd throng
 Throughout the tents to lead, and to recruit
 With entertainment due. The host obeys.

Book
 II.

VI. 987—1013

'Twas eve, and in the west the broaden'd sun,
 Calm-setting, o'er the varied landscape threw
 His purpling beams, which on the burnish'd steel,
 That cloth'd the moving troops reflected full,
 Enwrap the warriors as in sparkling flames;
 While from beneath their ruddy helmets stream'd
 Their shadowy tresses in the evening gales.
 Loud warlike music, and the sounding tread
 Of multitudes, the neigh of prancing steeds,
 The noise of lowing herds, the bleat of flocks,
 Swell'd the full tumult, that responsive far,
 With mingling echoes, hill and valley rang!

Th' attentive Monarch bids, thro' all the camp,
 His chieftains pass: nor fail the troops t' exhort
 Full from the festive table to partake
 Mead and deserv'd repast, their slacken'd strength
 To animate anew. Himself prepares,
 To meet his chieftains at the regal board.

Obeisant soon, amid th' illumin'd tents
 Pass the chief heroes, and with welcome voice

Salute the feasting bands. Uprise the guests
 Rev'rent around, of various groupe compos'd,
 Martial,—but, like those hospitable scenes
 Domestic, when mild peace at hallow'd times
 Kept jubilee, where unaffected shone
 Joy and serene benevolence. There sat
 Warriors in glitt'ring armour, tythings all
 Of friends, collegued each gloriously to die
 For other. Frequent intermix'd, the face
 Of beauty shone, scatt'ring around sweet smiles
 That charm'd the sense of pain or thoughts of war.
 Bards there in honour sat, and shot around
 Glances keen-fix'd, to mark whoe'er in fight
 Rush'd dauntless, and prepar'd his song of fame;
 Or, soft'ning to delight, beheld the looks
 Of virgins, sidelong bent upon the youths
 Best-lov'd, with speaking gaze. Harps thrilling struck
 Tones, full-responding to the solemn voice
 And rapt eye, rais'd to utter bold exploits,
 Crown'd with no fading glory: then, dissolv'd
 To melting languishment of sweetest airs,
 Plain'd the lamented fate of friends, no more
 To mix in battle, or at eve to cheer
 The feast with pleasant voice, now hush'd in death.

Book

II.

V. 1014—1042.

Converse succeeds: their Monarch's grand designs,
 His past atchievements, and his patriot toils,
 Dangers, and battles fought,—his hard escapes,
 England's much-alter'd face, since first his hand
 The regal sceptre pois'd:—these thro' the tents

From ev'ry raptur'd tongue draw grateful praise.
 The soldiers thus each other's swelling hearts
 Rouse to high ardour and devoutest love
 For their insulted country, eager all
 To follow the lov'd King to glory' or death.

BOOK
 II.

V. 1043—1071.

These, thus employ'd, the chieftains leave, and seek
 The Monarch's tent, there to enjoy, as wont,
 The sumptuous feast. Here entering, they behold,
 Well-pleas'd, th' exuberant board with grateful meats
 Spread, and ambrosial mead, and sparkling wines.
 Splendid along the princely table shone
 Vases of gold, with massy services
 Of silv'ry pomp; and (dazzling-bright as gems
 Or orient pearls) fair glassy ornaments,
 Invention new and priz'd, reflecting wide
 Lights in their brilliant shapes, tasteful dispos'd.
 Round the wide-affluent board the heroes take
 Their order'd place: Bishops rever'd, and Thanes,
 The female train, wives, matrons, beauteous maids,
 And venerable bards, in station due,
 Commingle. At the head the Monarch sat
 Crown'd, and his manly limbs array'd in arms
 That blaz'd with royal lustre. Him beside,
 On either hand, (th' accustom'd kingly meed
 Of gracious favour) took their envied seats
 Two hoary-headed bards: eye-witnesses
 Of many a brave exploit in foughten fields,
 Now living in the sacred rolls of fame.

Rising, the King salutes his seated guests,
 Welcoming all: the followers' proudest boast,
 Thus at their leader's crowded board to share
 Magnificent regale, whom equal pride
 And joy inspires, thus round him to survey
 The pow'ful chiefs, dearer from dangers past.
 Near each are laid their spears, and orb'd shields
 Pictur'd with effigies diverse, proud marks
 Of prowess pers'nal: or descent superb;
 And various-crested helms, with wavy plumes
 O'erhung. The heroes share the feast: with joy
 Proceeds the strong repast; the cheering wines
 Copious go round, and, in libations rich,
 Nectareous mead. Virgins, where'er they sit,
 (Proud honour!) joyfully dispense to all
 Plenteous refreshment, and in brimming cups
 Hand sparkling drink, offer'd with sweetest smiles.

Book

II.

V. 1079—1109.

Far at the opposite extreme, appear'd,
 Majestical, the Queen; and, by her side,
 The Monarch's sister, Ethelfleda, late
 The wife of Burthred, Mercia's King, now dead,
 Driv'n by the cruel foe to foreign shores.
 They their attentions mild, and affable
 Endearments, liberal with answering looks
 Diffuse around, and graceful animate
 The feast. Entranc'd is ev'ry warrior's heart
 To calm oblivious joy, won by the charms
 Of beauty, festive mirth, and genial fare.
 The full repast remov'd, meekly the King

Uprizes, and a golden goblet, crown'd
 With mead, exalting, first to heav'n returns
 Thanks due for all its goodness; solemn then
 Utters the fond memorial, Sorrow's claim;
 "Peace to the souls of heroes, fall'n in fight!"
 Then tastes, and rev'rent to his left compeer
 Extends the cup, with fervent raptures pass'd
 And pious love around. The sons of song,
 At wonted interval, prepare with awe
 To strike the living lyre, prompt each to pour
 Alternate rhapsody, potent to lift
 Chiefs to unfading glory and renown,
 Whome'er their sacred and deep-listen'd lays,
 Not venal, but to virtue only ope,
 Shall deign to celebrate. Soon stealing rise
 Along the taken air, from dulcet strings
 Ushering a sound conscious of sweetest being,
 Symphonious prelude and delicious tones,
 That sooth to trembling audience and amaze,
 The raptur'd ear. Which charmed breath diffus'd,
 Anon, deep-resonant, full-swung, the strings
 Swell at command the pow'ful voice, and shake
 With flying tumult all th' impetuous harp,
 Rouzing to awe and joy the heart-mov'd chiefs;
 While from the gifted mouth they hear resound
 Names high and various, each succeeding each,
 Calling the rapt attention to grand themes
 Of warriors, big with patriot-fire, and fields
 Won by their arm, and mightiest deeds of fame.
 No ear was vacant, of fix'd reverence.

Book

II.

v. 1101—1130.

To list what heroes won envied acclaim. **Book**
 High-throbb'd each heart, and ev'ry cheek betray'd **II.**
 Emotions strong,—swift-crimson'd, or all-pale, **v. 1131—1160**
 As varying passions sway'd,—of eager hope;
 Fear, or the flush of trembling joy. They sung
 Alfred, in raptures multiform: thee too,
 Osmund, the friend of learning, and in fight
 Terrible: nor less loud their songs repeat
 Oddune, and Herbert, Rayner, Athelard,
 (Athelard captive, or in battle slain)
 In strains diversified with majesty
 Resistless, and transfuse to lofty song
 Triumphal pomp. Then first to glorious fame,
 Edgar, the youthful chief; and Harold, Thane
 Valiant and modest, high were rais'd, and drew
 Welcome applause from all the festive board.
 Honour'd was then the hero, brave but rash,
 Alwin. Thee, Siward, too they plain'd, so late
 Wont with unenvying ear to list the praise
 Of noblest heroes, or in dreadful fields
 To spread wide paths for Vic'try's gory wheels;
 Ah! fall'n, and in the earth's cold bosom laid
 These sung, compos'd to melting cadence; soon
 Changes the furious stormy din of war
 To softest melody, that breath'd the praise
 Of female virtue, and the winning charm
 Of unassuming beauty, sweetest then,
 While in the tender offices of love
 Meekly employ'd; sedulous to deceive
 Anguish of bloody fields, or cheer with hope

The doubt and gloom of melancholy thought, Book
 Best sooth'd by social comfort, and the smile II.
 Of fond and female love. Ceas'd now the strains! V. 1161—1189.
 Of voice and music, pleas'd, the King, as wont,
 Presents to each glad bard a glittering gift,
 The meed of honour,—bracelets of pure gold,
 Or pendent chains to grace the sacred neck.

Pleasing discourse alternates, brimming cups,
 Fill'd honorary to deserving names,
 Or votive wishes of high enterprize:
 The King adjoins his grateful praise to those
 Heroes whose deeds have won the meed of bards,
 Judges and witnesses of valiant deeds,
 Edgar, new-honor'd name, inciting warm
 By acts of worth still to retain his fame,
 Cheers too the sadder Osmund with fond hope
 Soon to regain his Athelard, endear'd
 To all.

The battle's conduct, its strange turns
 And various fortune, each prompt tongue employ,
 With question apt and full. The Danish chiefs
 Character'd tempers, and their differing views
 Educe observant inference. Were recall'd
 The Danish leaders' deeds;—how Oskital,
 Devote to slaughter, avarice, and lust,
 Had led to spareless havoc; that by him
 Urg'd, the bold Amund, bred in storms and wars,
 Had sack'd the camp, in battle and in blood
 Exulting. Guthrun, kingly-brave, had fir'd

To list what ~~of~~ ^{of} pain or death,
 His ~~of~~ ^{of} the gods;
 He ~~of~~ ^{of} to think of palaces,
 As ~~of~~ ^{of} as sword in hand, gore bath'd,
 They press'd the reeking earth, which still they hail'd
 As glory's purple couch, and deem'd this life
 Well was exchange'd for never-ending joys.

Book
 II.

IV. 1199—1217.

'This heard, the fire of glory, and of virtue
 Apparent seeds, tho' in an enemy,
 Misled so fatally, and to bad end
 Perverted, from the thoughtful Monarch drew
 Sighs, and the soft'ning glow of tender pity,
 Which thus in moving accents from him broke,—

“ Oh, strange beliefs! which the surrender'd soul
 Prompt thus to yield up life, and set at naught
 All quiet, social bliss; but in dire fields
 Anguish to scorn and torment, and invite,
 With earnest longing, wounds and death—in hope
 Hence sure to seize the key that opens to worlds
 Of happiest glory, where in company
 Of gods and heroes, they may still enjoy
 Battles and feasts, till all these worlds shall end
 In universal war.—Oh, dreadful faith!
 Pow'rful as terrible! that fills with fear
 Of any death, save by the sword's fell stroke,
 Prohibited by threats of endless woe,
 And unrepriev'd abode in worlds of pain,
 Till all creation perish.—These beliefs:

Render so hard of victory, or firm leagues
 Our much-deluded foes. Guthrun, their King,
 (~~Sure no~~ ignoble leader) owns a soul,
 All awe and prostrate reverence for these gods,
 And scenes of fictitious glory: burning still
 To expel Christ's peaceful faith, and in its stead
 Plant in our isle these horrid mysteries:
 Of Christian precepts, mild and heav'nly true,
 Alas, unconscious! Doctrines, which alone
 Are potent to persuade and curb fierce man
 From savage violence, and can alone
 Melt the composed soul to love sincere
 Of tranquil peace, diffus'd benevolence,
 Affections kind and virtuous—duties dear—
 These sole endear and gladden life, and fit
 The soul for bliss, (not strange or unprepar'd)
 In worlds where peace and love immortal reign.
 Unhappy people! wand'ring from your homes
 In quest of wars and death—Ah! could we once
 Banish these clouds of error, and inform
 Your minds capacious with just rays of truth;
 Then might we hail you brothers, and of foes
 Hiding the name, forget these cruel wars;
 Bosom you as one family,—as friends
 United to restore England to peace,
 And found her happiness, her deathless glory."

Emotion fill'd the list'ning chiefs, still bent
 To hear, tho' Silence lent awhile soft pause
 To thought.—Next, Kenwulph's league and prime r

Attract discourse, by many execrate,
 By Rayner with meek pleas gently excus'd,
 And by the pitying King lamented more
 In sorrow than in anger. Him the Thane
 Hianfrid once had known, and now describes
 Ambitious and self-will'd, for treason ripe,
 Ere yet in open war he breath'd defiance.

Book
 II.

V. 1247—1275.

Pass'd in such converse, wanes the lengthen'd night;
 And now the fading lights, measuring the hours,
 Beckon repose, and whisper balmy sleep,
 Whose soft embrace may scatter freshen'd strength
 On limbs o'erwatch'd, and picture pleasing dreams;
 When, meek-uprising, the delighted guests
 Token departure; and to Alfred yield
 Heartfelt adieus. The venerable priests
 Forebode heaven's blessing, and dispense around
 Solace and hope. Bards augur proud success,
 Retiring. Soon the regal tent all leave,
 Pleas'd and much sooth'd in thought, and with deep awe
 Inspir'd to apprehend the grand designs
 Of their high Monarch, with benevolence
 And majesty sublim'd. Harsh discontent
 No bosom haunts, save of the vainer Thane,
 Hianfrid. He gloomy and sad retir'd,
 Troubled in heart, by rankling envy torn,
 To hear young Edgar, Harold, and high names
 Of valiant chiefs display'd by willing bards,
 His own unsung. Brooding malevolence,
 And hate, and sour suspicion, on he pass'd,

With solitary step, where his high tent
 Stood glimmering.

Book
 II.

V. 1276—1303.

Thro' the stiller camp had ceas'd
 Harps and the song of bards, and slumb'rous rest
 Inclined the wearied host, as tow'rd their tents
 The chieftains pass dispersing. Reigns hush'd peace.
 Solemn and calm, Night lifts her sober veil,
 While all th' innumerable train of stars,
 A glitt'ring canopy of soften'd gold,
 Spangle heav'n's azure vault, and to the moon,
 Full-orb'd, diffusing from her silent throne
 A flood of argent light, yield homage due,
 Each in his sphere, in various glory cloth'd,
 Mingling their tributary radiance.
 Now in the tents, o'er each helm-pillow'd head,
 Sleep shook her velvet wing, on each clos'd eye
 Scatt'ring oblivious dew. Around the camp
 Pac'd slow the station'd watches, of each sound
 That distant mov'd the dim-expansive air
 Conscious. While now o'er shapes obscure, and shades,
 Night urg'd her sable car in slow advance,
 Seated with Silence, her eye-fix'd compeer,
 Not unemploy'd angelic essences,
 Vigilant walk'd the earth, or pierc'd unseen
 The curtain'd tents, fraught each with heav'nly charge,
 Before the sleeping fancy to present
 Auspicious dreams;—or gently fan the lids
 Of wounded heaviness, till sealing rest
 Obedient came, and lock'd in rapt'rous peace
 Disturbed pain;—or, soaring high, o'erlook'd

The glimmering landscape with bright ken, to guard
 Danger approaching. BOOK
II.

V. 1308—1334.

Thus the gradual Night

Recedes, till rosy Morn at length unfolds
 Her saffron banner in the eastern skies,
 Borne by the hours before the dazzling car
 Of Phœbus, rising from the pearl-hung couch
 Of Amphitrite, and Ocean's coral bow'rs—
 Thro' every tent upspring the jocund troops,
 Fresh as Aurora's dews. The steel-girt chiefs
 Assemble soon before the royal tent,
 Ere the first lark had tun'd her matin-song
 Under heav'n's sapphire portals. Them awaits
 Alfred, already arm'd: and greeting glad
 Receives each sprightly hero. Age now feels
 The glow of youth. Thronging around appears
 Beauty in loveliest mien, where soften'd looks
 Decorous told the feeling heart, that griev'd
 The warriors' parting, and, suffus'd in tears
 Of fond affection, bade to each adieu!
 Tears, soon dispers'd by solace of return
 Promis'd, with multitudes of summon'd aids,
 O'er the surrounding hills to be beheld
 Marching in state to music's warlike sounds,
 Ere five times down the western sky the Sun
 Descending, shall illume the gold-veil'd waves,
 Or bid grey Twilight 'gin his shadowy reign.

The Monarch last each parting hero greets
 With accents valedictory, and tells

What purpos'd cares the vacant interval
 Shall occupy, till their desir'd return;
 Chief, to adapt for arms the stranger crowds
 Newly arriv'd, and into order'd bands
 Array their chosen youth: then to restore
 By active toil, and forage best, the camp.—

Book
 II.

V. 1335—1349.

Thus cheer'd, and of their destin'd embassy
 Instruct, the ducal chiefs, escorted proud
 Each, by his chosen train, on neighing steeds
 To their known provinces begin their way;
 Hail'd each by rising shouts from all the host,
 Witnessing their departure. With fix'd eyes
 These mark their course, till their last glimmering forms,
 Fading in distance, melt to vacant air!

— 2000 —

plasma and serum to the same level as the
control group. The plasma and serum were
then analyzed for the presence of the
antibody. The results showed that the
antibody was present in the plasma and
serum of the control group, but not in the
plasma and serum of the experimental group.
This indicates that the experimental group
did not develop an antibody response to the
antigen.

ALFRED.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK III.

Part of the Danish army, under the command of Guthrun, has arrived at Exeter, and encamped there. He surveys the works. The remaining bands, who have been employed in pillaging the country, successively arrive. The chiefs are welcomed by the bards with songs, suited to their several characters. The whole army being at length convened, the three Generals, Guthrun, Oskital, and Amund, address them in turn. Sacrifices to the principal gods, adored by the Danes, are commenced near the outskirts of the camp, at which the bards, or priests, of each officiate, and sing appropriate hymns, according to the Gothic mythology.

ALFRED.

BOOK III.

V. 1—19.

GUTHRUN, meanwhile, the Pagan King, had borne
Afar his populous legions, and the pow'rs
Chief of the Danish host, where rose the walls
Of Exham, station pre-consult. To him
As Sov'reign General, had the charge devolv'd
Fit place to choose, and in warlike array
Marshal the new encampment. His pitch'd tents
Extended o'er commanding heights, that sway'd
The subject town, and port, and champaigns rich,
Wash'd by the waters of smooth-rolling Exe,
Whose ample bay he destin'd should ere long
Feel his innum'rous navy ride her waves,
Transported hither from Dorsetian shores.
As yet in bands dispers'd, the other pow'rs
Arriv'd not, but, wide-roving, ravag'd fierce
Each intervening province, unoppos'd.
These, with their gather'd wealth, heralds had now
Summon'd to join the camp, whom their prime King
Awaited, where he lay, spacious intrench'd,

Maturing deep designs, his constant reign
 To fix in England's isle, and o'er her plains,
 Fertile and fair, his wand'ring colonies
 To stablish in continuous home, and hence
 Banish Christ's peaceful faith; but in its stead,
 To found among her native race, subdued,
 Religious rites that breath'd perpetual wars,
 Deem'd the sole gate of everlasting bliss.

Book
 III.

V. 20—48.

Pond'ring these aims, studious he had explor'd
 His peopled camp, which to th' alarmed eye
 Might seem to bosom space, immense no less
 Nor vast, than those huge Babylonian walls,
 Chaldea's fam'd metropolis, the work
 Regal of high Semiramis, whose wide
 Circumf'rence girt afar its glitt'ring fanes,
 And on whose top chariots in festive games
 Magnific pass'd, by wond'ring nations gaz'd.
 Flush'd with supernal triumph, all the host
 Glow'd for new wars and vict'ry: fury fill'd
 Their lab'ring breasts, as o'er the wide-spread tract
 Active they toil'd.

Conspicuous in the midst
 Rose the high tent of Guthrun, honour'd King,
 Glitt'ring with royal splendor. Near uprais'd
 Aloft, dark-stream'd, rolling in awful waves
 Along the shudd'ring air, the standard vast,
 Big with the holy raven's conscious form.
 Forth from his pomp-swol'n mansion, issu'd proud
 The sov'reign leader. Kingly was his shape,

And mien majestic, as with haughty strides
 Tow'ring he came, in steely armour hid,
 Profuse of gold. Shook by his stately steps
 Slow wav'd the sable plumes, that overhung
 His brazen helm, with honourable dints
 Of war inflicted deep. His massy spear
 Firm'd his gigantic stature, sway'd with ease.
 His pond'rous falchion, by his belted side
 Swung massive, as he stalk'd. His princely train
 Follow'd of num'rous bards, and sacred scalds,
 Whose flowing beards, time-silver'd, in each heart
 Struck deepest veneration. Rich they mov'd,
 With gifts munificent adorn'd of gold
 And splendid spoils, meed of illustrious song,
 Or sage instruction in deep mysteries
 To high-born chiefs; what gods in hour of need
 Friendliest invok'd, holy rememb'rance claim.

Book
 III.

V. 49—77.

Attended thus, the Monarch Gen'ral moves
 Amid his armed host, and eyes their works,
 Various. Their mailed armour frequent sprent
 With clotted gore, (signs of dire-foughten fields)
 Answer'd in union to their stern aspect
 And lofty stature, that bespoke the soul
 High and imperious. Busied on each hand
 Some rear or deck their warlike homes, or dig
 Mounds, or uprear broad banners to display
 Where habitate superior chiefs, who spread
 The sumptuous feast: others construct vast stores,
 Capacious of provision, forage, steeds,

And needful armour; some with awe devout **Book**
 Raise high the chaste-flower'd altars, whence shall rise **III.**
 Smoke of rich victims to propitious gods.

V. 78—106.

Thus o'er the tract immense unnumber'd cares
 The rapt attention draw, all bent to form
 Abode commodious for the present host
 And legions fast advancing. By his troops
 Ador'd, th' imperial chief toil's wearied brow
 Sooths with kind hope of proud regale, and song,
 Spoil, and extatic revels, giv'n to cheer
 Heroes, devote to war: " His brave compeers,
 " Worthy of Odin and heaven's martial joys,
 " Shall meet no common death abhorr'd, but thrown
 " Cover'd with wounds along the gory field,
 " Swords high-uplifted in their dying hands,
 " Shall yield with smiles of bliss their panting souls,
 " Soon borne to Valhall by wing'd messengers
 " In glorious cars. While Bards shall ever sing
 " Their names, recorded in triumphant strains
 " To endless ages. England soon shall feel
 " Her conquer'd plains, to other worthier sons
 " Allotted, and her fertile regions shar'd
 " In equal spoil by heroes fit to sway
 " Imperial sceptres, who continuous war
 " Provoking, shall enjoy glory and fight
 " Eternal. Soon his anxious wish expects
 " Return of all the parted legions, wide
 " Roaming o'er fields unsack'd, and realms new-won;
 " Soon too awaits hosts join'd in fed'ral league

" From Mercia's peopled vales, owning the sway
 " Of Kenwulph, tributary King, suborn'd
 " Their vassal-slave. Nor dormant was his hope
 " Soon o'er yon subject waves to mark the prow
 " Of Danish fleets in pomp triumphant glide."

Book
 III.

V. 107—133.

Thus cheering his brave followers, to the King
 Heralds arrive, announcing near at hand
 Legions approaching o'er the plain's dim verge.

Joy iterates from mouth to mouth: their works
 Depos'd, forth issue the thick-swarving troops.
 To hail their fellow warriors with applause,
 By vict'ry won.

As when in some deep vale
 From out their labour'd nests, hung o'er the roots
 Of ancient oaks that shade some hollow grot,
 The wild bees pour innum'rous, lur'd by scent
 Of thyme fresh-springing, and with blended noise
 Borne shadowy on the noon-tide air serene,
 Wake Silence sleeping in her mossy cave.

Bards take their full-strung harps: the aged priests
 And holy prophetesses willing join
 The glad procession. In the midst aloft
 Unroll'd its awful burthen on the wind,
 Bright in the sunny glare of radiant noon,
 Th' imperial banner, to the fervent eye
 Displaying, as it shook, ominous signs
 Of exultation. Distant on the sight

Banners responsive gleam'd : coruscant blaz'd
 Armour : the din of trumpets from afar
 Smote the glad ear, or neigh of steeds, or shout
 Triumphant.

BOOK
 III.
 V. 134-163.

Near advanc'd, a train immense,
 Steed-borne, or marching under helms and spears,
 Cover'd a flamy tract. Before them wav'd
 A snow-white standard, 'mid whose silky folds
 The pictur'd war-horse seen, bespoke the troops
 Of Amund, princely hero. From the rocks
 Of sacred Funen, where the city old
 Of Odin lifts her tow'rs, and hears around
 Tempests roll'd thund'ring from the Baltic waves;
 Or where the Sound torments his foamy isles,
 Haughty the warriors came, of stature vast,
 In aspect terrible, their tempers wild
 And savage as the scenes that nurs'd their bulk.
 Selected from their chieftain's rich domains
 In many a crowded ship their pow'rs had pass'd,
 An ample third of all the fleet immense
 That o'er the lab'ring seas to England's coasts
 Swarming arriv'd. Before their cloudy van
 Borne on his lofty steed, their mighty chief
 Came tow'ring, arm'd in threefold brass, o'er which
 The hair-clad skin of some wood-monster slain
 Grasping the helmet in its wide-op'd jaws
 Hung mantling, like that dreadful vest that cloth'd
 Alcides, in Nemæan forests torn
 By strength resistless from the Lion fell,
 Invulnerable to dint of armour, dropt

In vengeance from the Moon's eclipsing orb.
 Before the hero blaz'd his sun-like shield,
 Whose flamy weight uplift veil'd to the neck
 His dreaded form, and with circumference low
 Protected half his steed, terrific sway'd,
 As that Gorgonian targe, by Pallas borne,
 Where hung Medusa's snaky locks, that froze
 Th' infatuate gazer into senseless stone.
 Pow'rful he mov'd approaching ; him behind
 The thick ranks, deep-advancing, glar'd : he seem'd
 Likest the sable spirit of the storm
 That leads at midnight o'er the shrinking sea
 His fire-edg'd clouds, whose wombs o'ercharg'd explode
 Incontinent meteors. Him th' admiring crowds
 Welcome aloud, and wave their helms. The Bards
 Strike full their sounding harps, and pour the song.

Book
 III.

V. 164—192.

“ Hail ! Amund, great and brave, thunder of war,
 Come on thy fiery steed, welcome to feasts
 Of Heroes, songs of Bards, and Virgins' smiles.
 Sate of slaughter, Vict'ry sleeps awhile
 In her hot blood-dash'd car, and gives the reins
 To her tir'd charioteers. All have beheld
 Thy prowess : all adore the valiant : none
 Praises the coward : heroes from their sight
 Chase him who flies in battle. But thy arm
 Hurl'd storms amid the flying ranks, more fierce
 Than winds that rock Norwegian hills, and burst
 Sea-hollow'd caverns. Mightiest Thor survey'd
 Thy spear far-shot, and deem'd the thunder's bolt

Had scap'd his belt of pow'r, whose touch dejects
 Mountains with all their woods, and in the sea
 Uprears new islands. Heav'n's almighty King,
 Odin, All-Father, in his flamy car
 By tygers drawn, high-seated, mark'd thy deeds,
 As on thy snorting steed, whose nostrils smok'd
 Pestilence, thro' the shrinking foes thy sword
 Rag'd in the shock of bucklers, while thy voice
 Louder than ocean, lifted to the stars,
 Hearten'd thy thousands in the paths of death.
 Then Valhall's Prince omnipotent with joy
 Pointed thy course to Freya, his great Queen,
 Whose equal empire shares with him the slain,
 And bade his winged Valkyries, aloft
 Hov'ring to chuse the brave, see and admire
 Thy furious devastation. Thee they hail'd
 With glad acclaim, the chief who for heav'n's Sire
 Strews fields with heroes, and his foes in heaps
 Leaves as a smoking feast for ravenous kites,
 That lur'd by scent of slaughter from afar
 Wade o'er the blood-soft battle-field, and glut
 Their hungry beaks in flesh; a living tomb,
 With stride imperious stalking o'er the dead.
 Lo! at thy bold approach, the holy bird
 Flapping his sable wings, utters proud joy
 And shakes the fated standard with delight.
 Hail! warrior, worthy in immortal fame
 Glorious to live: awhile to fight on earth,
 England's abhorred terror; then to die
 In the grim press of slaughter, sword in hand,

Book
 III.

V. 193—222.

A hero's welcome death : thence soon upborne
 In Odin's car to his wide-glitt'ring halls.
 Heroes, thy Fathers, from their brilliant thrones
 Rising shall greet thee. All Valhalla's Bards
 Shall strike their choral symphonies, and lift
 Thy name, co-equal to assembled Gods."

Book
 III.
 V. 223—251.

Priests and the sacred prophetesses bend
 Lowly before the chief, and lead the way
 Full to the camp, amid the martial noise
 Of harps, and trumpets, clarions, and the roar
 Of bellowing drums. The hero bending hails
 The vast procession with obeisance meek,
 And greets the Bards. Under the wavy shade
 Of flapping banners came the legion host
 Of Amund, bearing high on thronging steeds
 Vast-knotted clubs, huge battle-axes, spears
 Or falchions, gory red ; and from the belts
 Of many hung terrific scalps of slain
 And hollow'd skulls, gold-edg'd, now festal cups
 To pass the flowing hydromel. Behind
 Slow mov'd a captive train of warriors, ta'en
 In battle. As they come, the King with joy
 Welcomes the stranger troops. In various tents
 Prepar'd, the captive warrior-train are shut
 In dim imprisonment, by Danish minds
 Deem'd direst vengeance, to whose ignominy
 And stain eternal preferable seem'd
 Cruellest death.

These thus dispos'd, behold !

Full near advanc'd, other new bands appear,
 Whose radiant arms and purpled banners far
 Crimson'd the fields around. Martial they came,
 Nor long unknown. Bards mark'd the floating pomp,
 And knew the Brothers of the fated three,
 Whose sacred hands the magic Reafen wove,
 Hinguar and Hubba, praise of noblest scalds,
 With auburn locks.—They from the piny hills
 Of Zealand had conjoin'd their vassal pow'rs,
 Skill'd or to wield in fight the missive spear
 Or steer frail barks across tempestuous seas.
 Soon as the crowds observ'd the eagle-forms,
 That on their pennons toss'd, the Bards address
 With open tones of joy the Sisters three,
 Standing with rapt awe near the mystic sign.
 “ Prophetic oracles of good or ill,
 Whom chiefs adore, and dare no enterprize,
 You unconsulted, yonder lo ! in air
 Sail the blue banners of your brother chiefs,
 Glitt'ring as shines the rainbow in dark clouds,
 Heaven's fiery bridge. Hail them with song : the Bards
 Shall add at feasts their iterated praise.”

Book
 III.

V. 252—279.

Nor unresponsive mov'd, in snow-white robes
 Advancing underneath the dread expanse
 Of the broad Reafen, the majestic three.

“ Bounding on foamy steeds, see ! shouting hosts
 Follow, rejoicing in their pow'r, elate
 In vict'ry, Hinguar, of tumultuous war

Bulwark, and near him, Hubba, princely sons
 Of the same Sire, Regner, the brave, the wise,
 King of fall'n armies! Loftily they sit
 Like Thor, high God of thunder, in his car
 Returning to his palace in mid-air,
 Victorious from dread battles with the foes
 Of heav'n. Hail! sons of Regner, who has died
 Laughing. Hail! worthy of your Sire. The Gods
 Smile on your deeds, and know you fit to stand
 On that tremendous day full in the front
 Of hosts celestial, when the worlds beneath
 Shall render up their habitants, and whelm
 Gods and creation. Not in age, or beds
 Of sickness, ye shall end your noble lives;
 For Odin claims you. Never have ye fled
 In battle. All your noble wounds appear
 Wide-gash'd in front. Struck thro' the riven heart
 Ye in the tempest of the fight shall gasp
 Your latest souls, and raise aloft your swords,
 Pledge of eternal bliss. We, Sisters three,
 Gifted by Heav'n to know the fates unborn
 Of men; who call by charms of Runic verse
 Ghosts from their hilly tombs, aghast to ope
 Deeds of futurity; we who converse
 With spirits various that animate
 Nature thro' all her works: who tell the names,
 The will, the attributes of ev'ry God,
 Thus prophesy. Enjoy the feast: indulge
 In riots: feast on Virgins' smiles. No toils,
 Save those of war, should stain a hero's fame.

BOOK

III.

V. 280—309.

Short is the tomb-doom'd warrior's glorious life."

Book
III.

V. 310—329.

Complacent to the chiefs the strains arose.
They on their azure shields display'd aloft
The image of their kingly Father, stretch'd
In agony, but o'er whose livid face
Smiles beam'd of thrilling joy. Their train immense
Of hardy warriors swift advanc'd, and struck
Their sounding targes. Amid low-brow'd caves
Oft had their blue shields gleam'd, and twanging bows
Shot far the growling monsters, so inur'd
To toils and perils.

Following these with spoil
And force tumultuous, mighty Haldene rode
Ardent for glory. After him appear'd
Frena and Sidroc, names of pow'r, whose souls
Glowing with equal rage of war, sought high
Distinction, to their Sov'reign Chief devote
With zealous loyalty. Bards tune their fame
With fervor. Guthrun welcomes all with arms
Outstretch'd, and tow'rd the camp prepares
To lead their moving train, 'mid whom unseen
Oskital, second chief, his dubious mind
The sov'reign Gen'ral opes, questioning all
What cause delays the hero. Amund soon
Sternly responding tells:

" Of spoil so fond
And rapine, treasures still unsatisfied
Amassing avaricious, can we doubt
Why last we hail his steps, who still prefers

Plunder to gen'rous feasts, and bold converse
 Of heroes, and the rapt'rous song of Bards?
 Not till incumber'd with the ruin'd waste
 Of countries, shall we greet his weary pow'rs."

Book
 III.

V. 349—369.

This said, strait onward to the stately tents
 The legions bend their course, where soon dispos'd,
 Joyful the troops admire their Sov'reign's skill,
 The spacious structures, the commanding scite
 Of their wide camp, opportune for attack
 Or sure defence; wand'ring mid objects new
 Delighted. Much the counsel they applaud
 Of Oskital; whose thought had first propos'd
 Breach of the fed'ral league, and spurn'd a peace,
 Ignoble and compulsory.

Ere long
 By high command the mingling hosts prepare
 A solemn Sacrifice to fav'ring Gods,
 In sacred place with holy care are rais'd
 Altars, and victims from the lowing spoil
 Select are led, adorn'd.

Which rites begun,
 Appear, ascending o'er the adjacent hill,
 Oskital's flamy banners, rolling wide
 The pictur'd wolves. His dreadful ensign knew
 Th' expectant Bards, and from the busied camp
 Forth issue gratulant. The train immense
 Slowly advanc'd, laden with spoil: a host
 On mighty steeds borne eminent, select
 From Sleswick's fruitful plains, or where the lake

Of Ploen o'er the wild morasses rolls
 Her cloudy mists, or from the sea-dash'd isles,
 Laland or Femeren, where continuous storms
 Roar thro' their piny forests. Crowded ships
 Thro' tempests driv'n had brought their banded pow'rs,
 Bound in strict vow never from England's shores
 Defeated to return, or seek again
 Their homes, devote to fires. Now come they on,
 Led by their savage chief, whose mail'd aspect,
 As dark he rode, reining his foamy steed,
 Terror diffus'd around. His dreadful shape
 Was veil'd from sight, and o'er his sullen brows
 Hung the low helm. Pond'rous his armour seem'd
 Both spear and shield, o'er his gigantic limbs
 Diffus'd.—Behind of answering stature rode
 His many banded legions. Mid their crowds
 Appear'd a captive train of aged Priests,
 Gash'd o'er with wounds, from monasteries torn
 Homes once of still and holy rest, devote
 To science; but with sacrilegious fires
 Burnt, and with murder stain'd. Old peasants there
 Beside their wives and decent matrons mov'd,
 Who to their fear-chill'd breasts with downcast look
 Prest their scar'd infants: Virgins all aghast
 Pass'd silent, dreading from the savage foe
 Dishonour more than death. With these spoil large
 Of flocks, and steeds, and oxen from the plough
 Unloos'd, and various forage from the stores
 Of thrifty husbandry, in throng'd array
 Went slow, and fill'd afar th' extended rear.

Book

III.

V. 370—399.

Approach'd the tents, Oskital soon accosts
 The Sov'reign Chief, with stern and sullen eye
 Fix'd on him fierce. "Why early thus are hosts
 Summon'd to join the new-form'd camp, nor space
 Giv'n for accustom'd spoil, and to secure
 The treasures of the foe, the due reward
 Of vict'ry, plann'd by other minds than those
 Assuming empire here? Fool I! who led
 Over the stormy main my pow'rful fleet
 Conjunct in servile fealty, from me won
 By treach'rous promises, unkept, of pow'r
 And countless riches, as the glorious meed
 Of high obedience. Had we come alone,
 England ere this were conquer'd. No weak leagues
 Respite had lent to peace; or, yielded, long
 Observ'd; nor idle fears of angry Gods
 Stopt vict'ry in mid battle, and career
 Of certain triumph. But smooth words have won
 Other our station, and the loss is our's."

Book
 III.

V. 400—438.

To him the Sov'reign Leader answer'd mild.
 "Oskital, great and brave, in wealth and pow'r,
 High-eminent, compose these fancied wrongs,
 And mix with heroes, leagued to share rewards,
 Promis'd, and won in part, and of themselves
 Worthy. Enough of time remains in wars
 Endless to gain high honour, both on earth
 And afterward in heav'n, and to subdue
 The realms of England, and her wealthy plains
 Apportion as our own. Thy pow'rs conjoin'd

VOL. I.

P

In disciplin'd obedience, from thy state
 And dignity nought derogate, but much
 Augment, else wild and to destruction sure
 Devote. The will of Gods short interval
 Of peace denies not: and in mid career
 Of vict'ry by behest inscrutable,
 (As late we saw) may bid the streaming sword
 Pause from its office, and the falling ranks
 Spare for fresh fields of honourable fame.
 But perj'ry I abhor. Would some just cause
 Had broke our latest league, and not alone
 Thy counsel, as I deem, too soon approv'd!
 For sure thou know'st, the gods, the hero-train,
 Detest the perj'ur'd, doom'd by fate's decree
 To float eternally in pois'nous floods:
 While Gimlé's heav'n-built regions shall receive
 Within her radiant palaces the just
 And good, to dwell thro' never-ending time.
 Therefore, as best beseems a hero, rest
 Content with present spoil; for future wars
 Prepare, and please the Gods. Enter, and share
 Honour, and company of noble Chiefs.—"

BOOK

III.

V. 429—437.

He ceas'd, and his persuasion thus adjoins
 Amund. "Why, Oskital, thus still complain
 Of spoil inadequate, and thus delight
 Wealth unenjoy'd to heap, and leave unshar'd
 And unenjoy'd, feasts after dang'rous fight,
 Converse of heroes, and the praise of Bards?
 Why ever brood thy thoughts on themes beyond

The present moment? Enter, and enjoy
 Present delights. Inexorable fate
 Has fix'd to each his hour. In battle brave,
 That ended, what becomes the hero-train
 But festal joys, mead, and the song of fame?"

Book
 III.

V. 438—486.

Appeas'd, the sullen warrior tow'rd his tent
 Mov'd silent. Thro' the camp the Sov'reign King
 Issues swift heralds, bearing high command,
 That all th' embodied host at station due
 Assemble strait to hear the warning voice
 Of their prime leaders, and to fav'ring Gods
 Pay holy sacrifice. Immediate all
 The wide-spread camp presents one moving scene
 Of steel-clad warriors throng'd in deep array,
 From ev'ry side commingling tow'rd the spot
 Appointed. Helms and spears conjunct around
 In wavy motion stretch'd their bright expanse,
 As the calm'd ocean spreads his quiv'ring waves
 Around some tranquil isle.

High in the midst
 Guthrun, and Oskital, and Amund, stood
 On lofty altars rais'd; and round survey'd
 Their hosts innumerable, not as yet
 Augmented by the summon'd rebel pow'rs
 Of haughty Kenwulph, nor the mighty bands
 Left by the shores of Wareham to escort
 Hither their potent fleets: yet num'rous these
 Present around, as those collected hosts
 Whom that far-fam'd Mogul, great Aurengzebe,

(Lur'd by the massy and eye-dazzling gems
 Dug from Golconda's mines) burning for spoil,
 Led o'er her wide dominions, and the realms
 Of Indian Rajahs from the precious hills
 Conquered to Comorin's Southern Cape, that lifts
 His promontory into bounding seas.

BOOK
 III.

V. 487—514.

Beside the Sov'reign King in circling space
 Altars appear'd, near which a female train
 Stood, and the Bards in flowing vests, the Priests,
 And holy Prophetesses. Silence soon
 Reigning around, th' emotions of his soul
 Thus, to the host imperial Guthrun spoke.

“ Danes, valiant countrymen, heav'n's King Supreme,
 Odin, has blest our battle. Now in lieu
 Of peaceful leagues and purpose to return
 Homeward awhile, our arms have won fresh pow'r
 And main advantage, so that now we call
 England our home, hence never to depart
 But own and rule this fertile isle. A place
 Worthy of Heroes, and sure well-exchang'd
 For rocks, and stormy isles, bleak barren wilds,
 And howling forests, where our native homes
 Late stood, ere we to vengeful flames resign'd
 The mansions mean; signal that fix'd abode
 We there would never hold. There life pass'd on
 In peace inglorious and the chase of beasts.
 Here we enjoy pursuits worthy alone
 Of heroes: battles with a race devote

To some mean, weak beliefs, studious of peace
 And humble arts, of Odin and the Gods
 Ignorant Infidels; and therefore doom'd
 To extirpation.—Gods have giv'n the strong
 Right to subdue the weak and o'er them rule,
 Fav'ring the pow'ful. Here our cause is war,
 Eternal war, where heroes can expire
 Pierc'd on the gory field, swords in their hands,
 Soon thence transported to the splendid halls
 Of heav'n's high King. Not dying, as at home
 By sickness or old age, and therefore doom'd
 To Hela's dread abodes, which to escape,
 At home necessity impels us ask
 The pitying hand of brother, son, or friend,
 On our mail'd breast to strike the mortal blow,
 And send us, cloth'd in armour, to partake
 Valhalla's joys, thus purchas'd.—Or perhaps
 Our own shrunk, feeble arm must lend the sword
 Its fatal stroke; or led to some high steep,
 Thence thrown; and dash'd to atoms, we must win
 Half-glorious entrance to heav'n's palaces.—
 But here we die, as every hero longs,
 Yielding the soul amid the iron storm
 Of battle, and the roaring shock of arms,
 In the deep bath of blood. What is the fate,
 Glorious and envied, of the hero-train
 But to fall, pierc'd with thousand wounds, amid
 The thickest war? Then Odin joyful sends
 His winged Valkyries, to lift to heav'n
 On beamy cars or fiery flying steeds.

The dying brave, smiling in agony.
 For well we know we part to dwell 'mid joys
 Unspeakable, still new, with heroes chos'n
 Of old, with them to share, battles and feasts
 In Valhall's azure plains and golden domes.
 We groan not, nor retire from certain wounds
 In battle, but with joy encounter death.
 While our weak foes, objects of pity, lost
 To sense of Odin and heav'n's martial joys,
 Groan amid pain, nor willing court their death,
 Preferring quiet and toilsome industry,
 To war and wounds: and therefore never call'd
 To share heav'n's joys and dangers, inexperienced
 In both, but doom'd to the tremendous world
 Niflheimer. But for us, Bards will record
 Our names on earth to time's remotest verge,
 While we above in Odin's happy halls
 Shall share rewards, which no hard toils, no deaths,
 Torments, or dangers, are of price too high
 Thus to ensure. With Gods to dwell in heav'n,
 To fight conspicuous in proud tournaments,
 Then safe-returning, ev'ry wound quick heal'd,
 To sit in palaces at gorgeous feasts
 Quaffing immortal mead from skulls of foes
 Slain by our arm on earth, survey'd by him
 Th' imperial Sire of Gods and men, who rules
 Whatever high in heav'n or mean below
 Awe, or escapes, the sight. Thus shall we spend
 An interval of ages, till that day
 Terrific, doom'd of old, which not ev'n Gods

Book
 III.

V. 545—574.

III

Contemplate without horror and deep awe,
When all heav'n's ancient foes from various worlds
Shall join their horrid legions, and invade
The realms of Gods. Then glory still remains,
Highest and greatest, to defend heav'n's King
And his celestial pow'rs. What raptures then
Must swell our souls, when Odin shall select
Warriors, most brave and bold, aptest for fight,
In front to stand along his sun-bright ranks,
Infinite in dimension, as in pow'r
Unconquerable, to contend unhurt
With nature's final enemies, when Gods
By fate's decree must perish, and this frame
Of heav'n and earth fall amid boundless flames,
Borne by the Giant Surtur from his world
Of fire, foredoom'd of eldest time to end
Creation. Then a happier place shall rise
From mid the ruins of the blazing worlds,
The splendid Gimlé, destin'd by that pow'r
The Silent and Invisible, Prime Cause,
To be eternally the blest abode
Of heroes brave and good. Who can revolve
These thoughts entrancing, and not burn for war
And death in battle? Honour all belongs
To bloody fight. Cowards who flee from death,
Conscious of these rewards, we justly deem
Worthless of brave society, and hold
All-ignominious. Such must never more
Appear with human kind, but hated flee
To dens and solitary caves, and there

BOOK III.

V. 575—604.

Pine out their miserable life with beasts,
 Fittest companions. Gods and men disown
 The wretch, whom after death pale Hela claims
 To dwell with serpents and her shadowy Ghosts.
 Here then our legions fix the lasting home
 Of us and all our race, for endless wars
 Prepar'd, and winning thus immortal joys."

Book
 III.

v. 605-634.

He ceas'd, and in applause the circling throng
 Rung on their bossy shields their furious spears,
 Madd'ning for battle. Distant hills the roar
 Reverberate, and echoing woods around
 Start, hush'd to trembling silence. Fear no less
 Alarms Trinacria's regions, when within
 The darken'd Ætna, (subterranean winds
 Or waters urging way) with thund'rous noise
 Earthquakes explode, and burst his fiery veins
 And sulph'rous caves afar, that many a league
 Totter both sea and land. Their martial mien
 Gladden'd the sov'reign chiefs, and now at last
 Compos'd, to them his outstretch'd spear high-wav'd,
 Oskital next the heartening speech resumes.

"Warriors and countrymen, now ye behold
 Triumph attend the well-concerted scheme
 Of leagues ignoble-violate, and fields
 Won by your daring valour, which disdain'd
 Vows madly pledg'd. Let none that bold design
 Brand with the name of perjury, which I
 Call laudable assertion of our power,

By any means atchiev'd, and dare avow
 Our right to waste this realm, her spacious plains
 To portion as our own, and all her race
 To rule as vassals. My deep-learn'd colleague,
 The kingly Guthrun, in impassion'd words
 Truly and well the great and proud rewards
 Prepar'd for valour by the Gods in heav'n,
 Unfolds to view. Yet more untold remains.
 Beside these glorious meeds, we reap on earth
 Spoil, and insatiate slaughter, and the wealth
 Amass'd of ravag'd cities : provinces
 Pillag'd and shar'd, to ev'ry man dispos'd
 His proper part : whence riches also crown
 Deeds of immortal praise. Commanding trains
 Of slaves attendant on your beck, and ranks
 Of martial steeds, and pomp of war : around
 To cast the eye, and view the rich domains
 And splendid domes, your own, and to your sway
 Subject, a proud inheritance, that claims
 Deep awe from all, to you, and to your sons
 Down to posterity, who of their sires
 Worthy, may range at large, and o'er th' extent
 Of England's wealthy regions exercise
 Lordly dominion : and the native race
 Call forth at pleasure in devoted ranks
 To bide the shock of battle and forc'd war,
 Victims of slaughter, or in thronging trains
 To swell imperial state—These high delights
 Scarce second to celestial joys, on earth
 Crown the victorious fields, destin'd for you."

Book
III.

V. 633—662.

He spoke, and scarce less furious clangor rung.
 Hideous applause, than when their Sov'reign chief
 Told of Valhalla's glories. Amund next
 His manly form erecting, and around
 His speaking eye quick-thrown, with noble mien.
 Thus to the troops his heart-warm thoughts exprest.

Book

III.

V. 663—691.

“ Heroes, friends, countrymen, you hear the joys
 Reserv'd for valour, and your gen'rous souls
 Know well the raptures, that the glorious toil
 Of arms repay, and for itself endear
 War worthy all observance. No mean cares
 Can stain a hero's fame, whose only joy
 Is still the bloody field, and after fight
 Ease and convivial mirth. The Gods have doom'd
 To each his end, and Fates immutable
 Know each man's hour. No mortal pow'r can change
 Destiny. Wherefore then the name of fear?
 By women scoff'd and babes. When battles rage,
 Then does the hero thro' the press of death
 And fiercest slaughter move unterrified,
 His mad steed plunging thro' deep gore, while ranks
 Fall underneath his arm, or fly aghast
 The thunder of his aspect. He by all
 Observ'd and proud-exalted, firm leads on
 Thro' paths of dearest danger, worthy sole
 Glory proportionate to valour, high-
 Excelling, full-resolv'd singly to face
 In desprate fight five enemies, nor shrink
 Tho' press'd on ev'ry side from certain death.

Welcom'd with smiles. So no captivity
 Can ever taint his honour, winning still
 Victory or proud end: pleasures on earth,
 If so decreed, or endless joys in heav'n.
 Dying, the Bards receive his honour'd name
 In never-dying song, to all the brave
 Example high, and boast: while he above
 Revels with Gods, and fights celestial fields.
 If spar'd for future war, delicious joys
 Await the battle ended. Splendid feasts
 With chiefs and heroes: all the raptur'd night
 To quaff bright mead from gold-tipt skulls, and wake
 Jovial festivity: to list the song
 Rais'd joyous by the Bards, and harps deep-touch'd
 To melting harmony: to lie at ease
 Exempt from toil and ev'ry care, and hear
 Praises from ev'ry mouth: kindly caress'd
 By virgin beauty, whose bewitching smiles
 Bend sole on him who shines in valourous deeds.
 These joys sole bless the brave. Unnotic'd stays
 The coward, and no virgins on him smile,
 But hate him, and their hands in wedded love
 Refuse. No songs record his name obscure,
 Mark'd but by scorn. Chiefs therefore by great deeds
 Should win distinction, and example high
 Hold to their following pow'rs: hence emulous
 In noble acts each other to excel
 And equal their bold leader. Oh! delights!
 Cheaply obtain'd by warlike toils, themselves
 Worthy all praise, and wounds, and agony

Book
III.

V. 692—721.

Unfelt of dying, crown'd by such rewards."

Book
III.

V. 732—750.

He ended here, and rous'd to highest rage
The troops all burn for battle, and to gain
Pleasures in earth and heav'n, and love of Gods
Eternal. Flush'd with triumph, now they vow
Wars never ending with their dastard foes,
And deeds of fiercest import.

Guthrun bids

Begin the holy sacrifice, while Bards
Prepare the songs of glory to the Gods.
All hear exulting ; and devoutest love
Of their high gen'als swelling ev'ry breast,
Tow'rd them they press, and offer uncontroll'd
The wonted honour, signal of respect
Greatest and first, aloft on seats adorn'd
To bear the steel-clad chiefs, admir'd from far.
'Mid shouts and clashing armour, standards roll
Numberless o'er the helms and wavy spears
That deck the circling host. Onward they bear
The far-hail'd leaders tow'rd the sacred spot
Ordain'd for sacrifice, where altars lift
Their pillar'd bulk erect, by mounds uprais'd
Conspicuous far. Here throng the sacred Bards
In princely robes, and venerable trains
Of Priests to each God consecrate, while rang'd
Beneath the magic Reafen, rolling wide
Its broad and awful burden in deep shades,
Th' inspired Dames, like marble-statues, stand
Eyeing with fixed gaze the holy form.

The Sov'reign Chiefs beside the lofty mounds
 Demand their honour'd station, whence to hear
 And mark at full the pious rites. Around
 The thronging army press: at distance due
 A circling range of stones the sacred space
 Inclos'd, and tumult all withheld. Uprais'd
 High in the midst a mighty spear to all
 Beckon'd the scene that all observance claim'd.

Book
 III.

V. 751—779.

Solemn attention reigns, and Silence seems
 Ev'n with herself deep-aw'd. The rites begin.
 First, the chief-honour'd band of holy Priests
 Devote to mightiest Odin, slow-advance
 Tow'rd the broad altar, on three columns high
 Of unwrought stone triangular dispos'd,
 Under whose canopy a deep, vast well
 Op'd its black jaws, receptacle prepar'd
 For parts of slaughter'd victims. Hither now
 With garlands deck'd, the sacrifice is led
 A warhorse, two fierce dogs, two cocks, two hawks—
 With sacred veneration by the Chiefs
 Observ'd, the Priests inflict the mortal stroke;
 Ejaculating, "Thus I send thee doom'd
 To Odin." Vessels catch the purple flood,
 Whose currents swift, ey'd by the holy train,
 Augur prosperity. On all around,
 Themselves, the Sov'reigns, Bards, the holy Dames,
 And circling troops, the Priests besprinkle blood.
 Then scan th' unfolded entrails with keen gaze,
 Foretelling happy omens. They dissect

The parted flesh, and o'er the altar lay **Book**
 Half of each victim, th' other part deep-sent **III.**
 Down to th' accusom'd gulf. Then holy fire **V. 780—803.**
 Struck from pure, unus'd flints the sacred pile
 Lights, and consumes the sacrifice: aloft
 The smoke ascends, glad presage. Which observ'd,
 The sov'reign Guthrun bids three raptur'd Bards
 Devote to Odin, strike their ready harps
 To hymns of martial tone: and sing in turn,
 First of the System of the various worlds
 And attributes of Gods: next, of the foes
 Of Nature that thro' various space exist:
 And last, the destiny of Gods and men.
 And consummation, long foreknown, of all.
 Successively advanc'd, the bards pour loud
 With eyes full-fix'd on heav'n, the song of praise.

“Odin, All-father, Heav'n's omnipotent,
 Lord of the ages, Governor of worlds,
 Or what magnificent titles more attract
 Thine ear, great God of battles, from thy throne
 Bright Lidscialfa, terror of all realms,
 Illustrious where thou sitt'st in highest heav'n
 From whence at one vast boundless glance, thou see'st
 All worlds, creation's universal scheme,
 Deign to observe thy vot'ries, and receive
 Our humble praises and meek offerings, signs
 Of prostrate awe and heart-warm gratitude
 Enshrin'd in glory inaccessible
 Thou, looking down from heav'n, view'st far below,

Hang 'mid th' ætherial vault, the flamy sun,
 Moon, and th' innumerable host of stars;
 And lower, floating 'mid th' abyss of air
 Fathomless, pure, of genial temp'rature,
 Our earth, the vessel of the ages, round
 Encompass'd by her ocean. Then thou see'st
 Far-heap'd beyond earth's northern verge, a world
 Of darkness, ice, and storms, thro' which transpierc'd
 Rivers roll poison in terrific floods,
 The dismal realms of Hela, Queen of death,
 Niflheimer nam'd: for cowards and bad men
 The doom'd abode. From off this hideous world
 Launch'd o'er th' expanse of air, hence northern blasts
 Bring on their icy wings, cold, hail, and roar
 Of mighty storms, that rend the earth and sea.
 But on the opposite extreme, beyond
 Earth's southern verge, thy turning glance beholds
 A dreadful world of fire, by mortal men
 Nam'd Muspelsheim, prime matter whence the sun
 And all the heav'nly fires had birth, where rules
 Surtur the vast, and in his empire old,
 Constrains its flamy habitants, foreknown
 The fiercest foes of Gods. Hence southern winds
 From these hot regions o'er the earth diffuse
 Warmth and mild vapours. Then o'er all the heav'n
 Turns thy swift eye, whose glance undazzled views
 Splendor ineffable, and glorious shine
 Of heav'n's bright cities, the proud majesty
 Of high Breidalbik, Glitner flaming wide
 Of gold, and Alfheim, and Valascialf

Book

III.

V. 809—838.

The great and royal, of pure silver rais'd,
 And sun-bright Gimlé, destin'd to endure
 Eternal. Thou amid these fulgent states
 See'st all the Gods in radiant synod meet:
 First Thor, the thund'rer, him whose empire sways
 The boundless air.—Balder, thy second birth,
 Whose fulgent visage darts celestial rays,
 The beauteous Deity, belov'd by all,
 Eloquent and benign:—Niord, the mighty God,
 Whose pow'r controuls the ocean and its storms,
 Rich, and to whom he loves, potent to give
 Kingdoms and treasures.—Next intrepid Tyr
 Stalks proud, by warriors oft invok'd, the God
 For valour fam'd and prudence. Bragé there
 Majestic moves, and tunes his sacred harp,
 God of poetic lays, whose wisdom joins
 Apt eloquence. There potent Heimdal dwells
 The sentinel of heav'n, whose trumpet sounds
 Thro' all the worlds; and from his kingly fort,
 Built on heav'n's fiery bridge, Bifrost, which men
 Surname the Rainbow, his keen eye quick-throws
 Numberless leagues around, destin'd to guard
 Heav'n's entrance from her Giant-foes. There move
 Vidar the silent, Vali, archer skill'd,
 Uller the active, God of single fight:
 And splendid numbers of less pow'rful Gods;
 With all the Goddess train, Frea, bright Queen
 Of heav'n, thy regal consort, whose high rule
 Earth also grateful owns. Then Freya, next
 In honour, beauty's Queen, by Oder left

BOOK
 III.

V. 339—344.

Her fickle Paramour, whom now she seeks
 Thro' ev'ry clime and from her eyes distils
 Tears of pure gold. Eira, who stately claims
 Her office high, Physician to the Gods,
 Copied by noblest dames. Gefion the fair,
 Lover of chastity. Siona, good,
 Whose gen'rous care 'twixt angry lovers breathes
 Harmonious concord: and, companion meet,
 Vara severe, whose conscious thoughts observe
 The lover's promise, and exact the vow.
 There moves conspicuous, Gna, the messenger
 Of heav'n's imperial Queen, whose flying steed
 Sails thro' the boundless air with light'ning haste
 Or o'er the waves. With all th' innumerable band
 Of Goddess-Valkyries, whose office proud
 Is giv'n to grace Valhalla's splendid halls
 And from the gold-tipt skulls with lib'ral hand
 To pour celestial mead, at feasts divine.
 Others on fiery steeds, or radiant cars,
 With awful embassy to chuse the slain,
 And give the poise to victory. Here is seen,
 Bragé's fair spouse, Iduna, she who bears
 The fruit delicious, ate by Gods, whose taste
 Restores perpetual youth. And here the Fates,
 Urda the past, Verdandi, present Queen,
 Schulda, the future, holy Sisters three,
 Keep residence beneath the wond'rous ash
 Great Ydrasil, whose boundless-stretching roots,
 Parted from heav'n, o'ershadow and connect
 All worlds. These weave the doom of each man born.

Book

III.

V. 869—898.

With awful terrors, and his destiny
 Transmit to thee, Almighty Father, borne
 Swift by their silent Ravens, whom they send
 Daily round ev'ry world, till at thine ear,
 Night shews them whisp'ring ever of events
 Soon to arrive. But thou, deep-boding King,
 All these celestial glories, and the vast
 Connected universe, with keen regret
 Surveyest, conscious of their final fate,
 And mournful pond'ring still, that all must end
 In hideous ruin, on that fated day,
 When nature's enemies, pre-doom'd of old,
 Shall burst their chains, and from their various worlds
 Assembling shall invade heav'n's highest realms
 With terrors irresistible. Thine eye
 Turns then, alarm'd, on these dread foes, dispers'd
 Throughout creation, tho' confin'd, or bound,
 Till fated time shall summon them to war."

Book
 III.

V. 899—926.

Ceas'd now the Bard; with agitated look
 He turns tow'rd his compeer, who stood with mien
 Trembling, aghast, while he prepar'd to name
 The horrid foes of nature. Guthrun marks
 His tranced frame and calls aloud. "Fear not;
 Heroes shall live that dare to face these foes;
 And from their grasp defend the shrinking Gods
 And falling heav'n; declare their hideous pow'r's."

Then thus with harp and song the sacred Bard.

" God of the ravens, all-surpassing King,
 Father of slaughter, Odin, we recount
 With holy awe, thy fated enemies.
 Chief, in that fiery world, dread Muspelsheim,
 The mighty Giant-brood, glowing as flame,
 By Surtur rul'd, black Demon, whose vast hand
 Sways his proud sword, sceptred as with a sun.
 Next, underneath the earth, ranging at large
 Amid the pure abyss of air, the race
 Pow'rful and huge, the Giants of the frost,
 Form'd of the gelid drops, from the cold north
 Blown, and here mixing with the genial warmth
 Borne from the south, impregn'd with breath of life.
 Then, on the earth, within his cavern vast
 Shut, and three pond'rous mountains o'er him prest,
 And bound in ninefold iron chains, dread Loke,
 That Evil Principle, Father of Fraud,
 Foe and disgrace of Gods and men, who here,
 A vast-suspended serpent on his head
 Dropping continuous venom, horrid howls
 In agony, and turning his huge bulk
 Shakes the firm earth, that his concussions men
 Name earthquakes. Next the threefold progeny
 Of Loke, all monsters like himself, whom Gods
 Not unappall'd behold, tho' separate now
 In bonds: first low amid earth's central womb,
 Chain'd to a mountain's roots, th' enormous Wolf
 Fenris, thro' whose vast jaws the sword of Tyr
 Pierc'd, tortures him with never ceasing pain,
 That from his mouth a foaming river flows,

Book
 III.

V. 927—956.

Surnam'd by men, the Vices. Next within
 The boundless ocean sunk, the Serpent huge
 Midgard, who his tremendous body twines
 Round all earth's globe, and in his jaws immense
 Seizing his tail, there horrid-rolling bids
 Tempests afflict the sea, by mortal men
 Nam'd Sin. And last, Hela, the Queen of death,
 Loke's hideous offspring, in her own dark world
 Reigning o'er shrieking ghosts and spectred shapes,
 That mournful wander thro' Niflheimer's caves
 Of woe and pain. Then on the Gods thou bend'st
 Thy sage and prudent look, and know'st them all,
 Ev'n all their pow'r conjunct, inadequate
 Against such dreadful foes, and know'st it thence
 Needful to fetch from earth to highest heav'n,
 Heroes, the bravest of earth's sons, to aid
 Gods in their dang'rous charge, and guard, allied,
 Heav'n from her Giant-foes, and Loke's fell brood,
 Lest bursting their vast dungeons, ere their time,
 Irruent they force heav'n's citadels, and wrest
 Celestial glories from their rightful King.
 Therefore, on earth battles and endless wars
 Delight thee; school of heroes, where in proof
 Their valour may appear, and bold deeds shine
 In full conspicuous trial. Thou ordain'st
 Brave death in gory battle, sword in hand,
 Sole test of merit, summon'd to defend
 Heav'n's empire from her foes, and class'd with Gods
 To share their feasts and by their sides contend.
 Therefore to earthly battles thou descend'st,

Book
 III.

V. 957—986

Shrin'd in celestial glories, on thy car
 Sun-bright, by tygers drawn, to mark where chief
 Rages the press of slaughter, thence to chuse
 The bravest warriors slain, members most fit
 To grace Valhalla's legions. Thou delight'st
 When all the field is heap'd with dying chiefs
 Smiling in agony, for then thou know'st
 Numbers new-chosen join thy warrior-bands.
 Need hast thou, (as thou know'st) there to array
 Innumerable hosts, nor pow'r of worlds
 Would prove superfluous. So thy Valkyries
 Perform their awful office, and select
 Whom they deem worthiest, lifting them in cars
 Aloft thro' skies to heav'n's cerulean fields."

Book
 III.

V. 987—1003.

He ceas'd: for now the Sov'reign Guthrun call'd,
 Delighted—"Oh! extatic hope!—approach,
 Thou last revered Bard of Heav'n's Supreme,
 Strike the loud harp, and tell what joys await
 Heroes in heav'n, and the predestin'd doom
 Of all supernal and terrestrial things;
 Themes far surpassing ev'ry mortal thought."

Struck his deep harp th' impatient Bard and sung.

"See! from their splendid thrones the Gods arise
 In honour, as with war-steeds and the trains,
 Who with them faithful died, Heroes assume
 Their seats in Valhall's palaces, proud-raisd
 Amid the star-pav'd heav'n, whose lofty roofs

Are hung from end to end with golden shields,
 Armour, and martial trophies. Here they live
 In crowds unnumber'd, and increasing still,
 Feasting on flesh of boars and sparkling mead,
 While harps and song roll music's swelling tide,
 And Heav'n's Omnipotent partakes their joy.—
 Ended the feasts, the countless crowds arise,
 And sally from the halls in wide array,
 Arm'd various, till in martial ranks dispos'd
 Begins the pomp of battle, and display
 Of splendid tournaments. Admiring Gods
 Throng round, spectators. Shields celestial ring,
 Arms clash, and all th' illimitable heav'n
 Roars with the shock of battle. Thousands fall
 Pierc'd, and the boundless fields are strown with slain;
 Till the fight ceasing, and the custom'd hour
 Of due repast arriv'd, lo! all uprise
 Safe and unhurt, and join the warrior-train,
 Returning to enjoy deserv'd regale,
 On mighty tables 'mid gold-flaming domes.
 These are thy glorious meeds, Parent divine,
 Prepar'd for heroes, fated to endure
 That total interval of destin'd time
 Till dawns the day, tremendous to conceive,
 Twilight of Gods, when all heav'n's ancient foes,
 Kuowing the long-doom'd season spent, at once
 Shall burst their self-op'd barriers, and assail
 Heav'n's tow'rs, with aggregated hosts and pow'rs
 Invincible. Remain for heroes then
 Dangers the last, but highest, and rewards

Book
 III.

V: 1004—1033

BOOK •

III.

V. 1034—1063

From light, where serpents vomit poisonous floods,
 In which their tortur'd careases must float
 Eternally, shut out from hope and rest,
 And oft imploring final death in vain.
 Oh! then, plenipotent, omniscient King,
 May we all die in battle, sword in hand,
 In armour clad. May ne'er decrepit age,
 Or pallid sickness on the bed of peace
 Lay us along to die, but in the bloom
 Of youth or vig'rous manhood may we end
 Our noble lives, and pierc'd with thousand wounds
 Fall smiling in the gory rage of fight.
 We burn for endless battles with a race,
 Unknowing and unknown of thee, who shew
 Old men amid their ranks, and tame expire
 In shameful beds of sickness, doom'd by thee
 Our victims, as the nursery of men,
 Destin'd to swell thy legions, and to grace
 Heav'n's mighty hosts and radiant palaces.
 Oh! on our battles then, with fav'ring eye
 Still look: be thou our friend: may never sign
 Of the faint-drooping raven awful bode
 Thy dread displeasure, and thy aid withheld.
 But lead our hosts to victory: nerve their arms
 With pow'r unconquerable, and their hearts
 With mightiest valour and high scorn of fear.
 So shall we own unending wars, and win
 Kingdoms on earth, and by heroic death,
 Glories of heav'n; and everlasting ire
 Vent on the dastard foes of us and thee."

Book
 III.

V. 1065—1093

They ceas'd. Immediate from the total host
 Shouts furious rose, and o'er the blazing air
 Immumerable swords, swift-wav'd, far flash'd
 As one vast sheet of fire, or as the sea
 Rob'd in the beams of morn, while all aloud
 Call "Odin, Odin," to receive their souls
 In bloody fight, and on their sounding shields
 Clash tumult, unappeas'd. Their falchions broad,
 Cypher'd with Runic shapes mysterious, all
 Kiss fervent, and with awe implore their aid
 In battle, and to pierce the storm of war.
 Where high amid his blood-red chariot Death
 Awaits the sons of heav'n.

Book
 III.

V. 1094—1122.

Which frenzy hush'd,
 Approach the train of Prophetesses, deck'd
 In snow-white robes, daughters of Kings. Their pomp
 Follow'd a beauteous female band, alike
 Devote to Frea, heav'n's imperial Queen,
 Odin's magnificent bride, Goddess of earth
 To these with rev'rent awe capacious place
 Is op'd around, as passing they conduct
 Tow'rd the broad altar, princely sacrifice;
 Beasts, birds, and fruits, flow'rs, gems, and silken robes.
 These offer'd due, the noble females take
 Conspicuous station, and receiving, strike
 Symphonious harps, while their entrancing voice,
 Audible far, thus swells the sacred song.

"Goddess of this fair earth, heav'n's sovereign Queen,
 Illustrious Frea, Odin's beauteous spouse,

Mother all-fruitful, Queen of love, receive
 Our pious gifts, our grateful meed of praise.
 Thou with imperial pomp in highest heav'n
 Enthron'd sublime, receiv'st with majesty
 The Goddess train, and all th' obeisant Gods;
 Ev'n heav'n's high King himself, with regal state
 Awaiting thee. But 'mid the dazzling glare
 Propitious, kind, thy ever-watchful thoughts
 Turn on the race of men, and this their earth,
 Dependent on thy care; to thee of old
 Giv'n and confirm'd thine own. Thou oft descend'st
 On thy refulgent car of glossy green,
 Drawn by impetuous steeds; before thy steps
 Precursive, Gaea, thy stately messenger
 Borne on her winged horse, whose shadowy flight
 Sails thro' the various worlds. Thy rolling wheels
 Hung stationary, from aloft thou view'st,
 Below, thy fair dominion; wide-outstretch'd
 And various: continents, and isles, and seas,
 And spacious rivers, intersecting oft
 Climes of still varying temperature: not like
 In aspect, but assign'd the fit abode
 Each for brave men, and heroes, whom thou lov'st,
 Habitant there, till death in bloody wars
 Summon them hence, and of the slain to thee
 Yield thy proud moiety. Hence therefore thou
 Delight'st in battles, knowing the rich prize
 Thy destin'd portion: and thy rising hills,
 And spacious campaigns spreadest wide, for camps
 Apt, where the front of war in long array

BOOK

III.

V. 1094—1122

I. 107

Marshall'd, may stand oppos'd; and uncontroll'd, Book
 Battles may rage, and blood profus'd in streams III.
 Purple the spacious verdure, and enrich V. 1153-1162
 Thy sloping pastures far. Thou cloth'st the earth
 With piny forests, mighty oaks, and trees
 Of pond'rous bulk, adapt for weapons huge,
 Javelins, and bows, and massy clubs; or whence
 Vast ships are form'd with beams and tow'ring masts;
 And bid'st the gummy barks of branching woods
 Distil the unctious pitch, to sheath the sides
 Of stately vessels, fitted hence to ride
 Firm and compact the stormy seas, and bear
 Warriors to distant regions, meet for spoil.
 Within her ample womb thy brooding care
 Conceives indurate metals, ores and mines,
 Iron or brazen mould, ordain'd to form
 Armour, the bossy shield, the massy spear,
 Helms, and the robing mail. O'er all thy plains
 Multiplied, thou diffusest fiery steeds,
 As thunder strong, who 'mid the battle's storm
 Rush fearless, raging, while their nostrils smoke
 Fury, and lightnings from their eye-balls glare.
 These treasures to the valiant race of men
 Benignly giv'n, thou justly hence expect'st
 Continuous war: and when the martial pomp
 Of closing legions joins in shouting storm,
 Fierce thro' the darkest fight where thousands bleed,
 Gna darts, thy stern ambassadress, and claims
 Thy birth-right, half the slaughter'd brave. Tho' plains
 Lie strown with shiver'd arms and mangled steeds

Wide-ruinous, thy lib'ral bounty yields
 Stores unexhausted for fresh fields of death.
 And when the thunder of the fight at last
 Receding, lends short interval to joy,
 Thou for thy favor'd race of men prepar'st
 Sports fit, the pleasures of the bounding chace.
 Soon as the early dawn with radiant gold
 Tinges thy misty hills, from shadowy caves
 Amid wide-stretching vales, thou artful driv'st
 Attractive prey, the prowling wolf, the boar,
 Or rapid elk: or near smooth-falling streams
 And tufted groves, direct'st the dappled deer,
 Fleet hare, or wily fox: or soaring high
 To the swift arrow point'st thy winged brood,
 The tow'ring eagle, oras, or the hawk.
 Thou too indulgent spread'st the earth with flocks
 And herds, spoil ample after victory,
 Whence the full board teems with superb repasts.
 Corn o'er thy sunny plains, and shelter'd vales
 Waves billowy gold, mother of sparkling mead,
 Odorous-streaming, yellow, rich impregn'd
 With the bee's luscious sweets. . . Delicious fruits . . .
 Hang clustering o'er the bended trees, and shed
 Purpureal fragrance thro' the shadowy leaves:
 And for depasturing flocks soft-juicy grass . . .
 Luxuriant springs, and clothes the earth's smooth breast
 In cheerful green. . . These noble gifts thy love
 Contrives for valiant men, and shews to them
 Thy glory: Queen of beauty, oft thou deck'st
 Thy wide-extended realm in fair array . . .

Book

III.

V. 1183—1212.

Of grace inimitable. Gems and gold
 Lurk in thy bosom, and meek-blushing flow'rs
 Of ev'ry variegated hue gay-paint
 Th' enamel'd meads, the sloping lawns : tall shrubs
 Uplift their tender forms in arb'rous tufts
 Or rising groves, where'er the sun-shine hangs
 Enamour'd, by the grotts of coy recess
 That spread their checquer'd shade near rippling streams.
 The softly-rolling murmur down the vale
 Steals calm, till hush'd within some placid lake ;
 There rests the trav'ler tir'd, at ease repos'd,
 Sweetly delighted, and admires the scene :
 While 'mid tranquillity no sounds disturb
 Solitude, save what Silence loves to hear,
 The wild-bees' hum beside the dripping cave,
 Or on the lake's smooth face the sudden rush
 Of playful fish, that to the circling top
 Spring wanton, tempted by the gilded flies
 Shadowy-reflected in the glassy deep.
 To the sooth'd senses balmy breezes waft
 Fragrance, borne mild from blooming banks, diffus'd
 Around, and from sequester'd bow'rs the birds
 Attune sweet-warbling melodies, the bards
 Of nature, whether Eve descending spreads
 Gold o'er the western clouds, and meek retires
 Amid the low of cattle, scattering soft
 Her dews with parting hand to cheer the world :
 Or Morn ascending in the saffron east
 Unveils her gorgeous car, and sheds anew
 Light, life, and beauty. This so fair display

BOOK
 III.

V. 1213—1242.

Of matchless grace thro' all the conscious world
 Breathes but for thee, imperial Queen of love,
 Accordant sentiments of joy, and youth
 And universal love. All Nature feels
 Thy vital influence, and a tender glow
 Warm-thrills thro' all her veins, waking desire.
 Beasts seek their willing mates: the feather'd race
 Connubial nestle in the secret bush.
 Man turns to lovely woman, heav'nly-fair,
 Lavish-endued with all thy milder gifts,
 Matchless in beauty, unexcell'd in love,
 Fruitful in offspring to thy fondest wish.
 What wonder if the hero doting prize
 Creature so bless'd, and as divine adore,
 When in his arms he holds and knows his own
 Consummate grace, by equal love endear'd,
 Soon too presenting to his ravish'd sight
 A blooming race of creatures, like himself.
 For whence thro' all attender'd nature runs
 So rich a chain of love, but to ensure
 Fruitfulness answerable, and increase?
 Pleasing to thee; by thee to this great end,
 All-fruitful mother, gently thus allur'd.
 All nature teems with life, from lordly man
 Down to the insect train, from tow'ring oaks
 Down to the tender grass, and from thy hand
 Exuberant, source of all things, grateful owns
 Kind parturition, and disburthening throes.
 Delighted woman in her eager arms
 Receives her smiling infant, and from thee

Book
 III.

V. 1243—1272

Extatic learns the mother's tender joys
 And soothing cares: and trains her rising youth
 To grateful love of thee, and heav'n's high King,
 Thy regal Consort: ready to devote
 Life for your honour and to guard the Gods.
 To thee we render glory. Genial still
 And good remain. Continuous blessings shed
 Around of plenty, love, and smiling youth.
 To our fair females yield a numerous race
 Beauteous, and strong, and brave, meet for the fight;
 And oft incite thy Spouse to grant us wars.
 So never shall thy honour'd altars want
 Due offerings, nor thy name perpetual praise."

BOOK

III.

V. 1273—1291

Ended the song, the sacred females bow
 Humble. ' The universal host in sign
 Of rev'rence on the earth desiring looks
 Bend fond, and gently touch with ported spears.
 Clamour of joy arose: and proud delight
 Beam'd in a conscious smile on ev'ry face.



ALFRED.

BOOK IV.

Vol. I.

T

ARGUMENT OF BOOK IV.

Hymns to the Pagan Deities continued. The Danes by these superstitious rites are rendered furious for battle. Kelwulf's arrival. His army is associated with that of the Danes. The latter insult and disdain the Mercian troops as being Christians, and unworthy to be ranked with Heroes. Feasting in the Danish camp. The manners of the Danes described. Guthrun entertains the principal officers in his tent at a banquet, to which Kelwulf is invited. Bards sing the praises and characters of several Danish chiefs. Night. After the feast, Kelwulf privately opens himself to a confidential Mercian officer, and is exhibited as stung by poignant remorse for his desertion of Alfred, and as harbouring secret hate against the Danes. During the night, Satan, recollecting his threats and meditating revenge, assembles his powers in the air; and divulges to them a project he has formed of departing to Hell, his own world, to fetch from thence more fierce and subtle Spirits, as he finds his present forces unequal to cope with the Angels. The Demons applaud the design. Satan departs in secret on this embassy.

ALFRED.

BOOK IV.

V. 1—18.

NOW tow'rd the altar solemn move the priests
Devote to mightiest Thor, and sacrifice
Appointed lead along, two oxen large,
With emblems proud adorn'd. Silence again
Paus'd universal, as the victims fall
Beneath the mortal stroke. The wonted rites
Perform'd, th' attending bards their raptures high
Awake to kingly Thor, and swell the song—

“ All-father's eldest-born, mightiest of sons,
God of the thunder, Thor, great King who rul'st
In empire old the azure-vaulted skies
And all the boundless air, receive thy praise.
Aloft amid the pure empyreal arch
Thy winding palace lifts its gorgeous pomp,
Where countless halls and glitt'ring domes outspread
Rival magnificence and glorious shine
Afar, and golden columns high upraise
Ceilings of silv'ry splendor, blazing rich,

In endless range; Thrudwanger nam'd, the house
 Immense and radiant, chief of mansions, dwelt
 By Gods or men. Exalted here thou fill'st
 Thy spacious throne, with majesty and pow'r
 Cloth'd inexpressible, and call'st around
 From ev'ry quarter, hast'ning to thy beck,
 Thunders, and meteors wing'd with angry fires,
 Winds, and red-flashing light'nings, rains, and storms,
 Pointing to each his place. They sullen move
 In due array behind thy high-arch'd car,
 Illustrious flaming o'er astonish'd heav'n,
 And wait thy stern commands. Beneath thy feet
 The many-colour'd clouds their airy shapes
 Mingle, and rolling high their fleecy veils
 O'erspread thy glitt'ring structures, with meek grace
 Softening th' empyreal blaze. The golden Sun
 From the deep-purple'd east o'er highest heav'n
 Urging his gorgeous car, by Skinfax drawn
 The flamy steed of day whose radiant mane
 Illumes the earth when dawn's first splendors break,
 Passing surveys thy regal state, and oft
 Aw'd and enamour'd o'er thy brilliant tow'rs
 Hangs, wond'ring. Thou, superb-advanc'd, behold'st
 The earth outstretch'd immense, and from thy hands
 Dispensest genial seasons. Kindly rains
 Refresh th' expectant fields. Delicious airs
 Wave mild their odoriferous wings, and shed
 Plenty on nature's open breast. Soft dews
 Breathe their rich-fostering drops o'er opening flow'rs
 And wake the sleeping verdure, Second spring

Book

IV.

V. 19—48,

Gay-paints the summer's arid robe, and decks
 Anew brown-changing autumn. All the earth
 Smiles glad, and from her bosom sends aloft
 To thee, the God of seasons, incense proud
 Fragrant-exhaling. Thus when calmer skies
 Bespeak thee pleas'd; and kind thou deign'st to hear
 Thy vot'ries' pray'rs. Not so when, oft-provok'd,
 Thy temper mutable, its brooding rage
 Vents terrible, and heav'n's vast vault scarce holds
 Thy desolating wrath. For when the foes
 Of Gods in secret from their nether worlds
 Ascending, hope insidious to surprize
 The forts celestial, or by main attack
 To scale her guarded tow'rs: or when bad men
 By low and coward deeds incense thine arm,
 Then on the world thy loosen'd terrors roll.
 Who can withstand, who can describe thy rage?
 Girt in thy belt of pow'r, which to thee adds
 Redoubled strength, and in thy grasp upheld
 Thy thund'rous mace, which launch'd as oft returns
 Spontaneous, and thy iron gauntlets wrapt
 O'er thy broad hands, scorch'd else by blasting fires,
 Thou from thy burning portals issuest swift
 A gloomy being, terrible and vast,
 Summoning with voice tumultuous to thy side
 Darkness, and brooded tempests, and the night
 In sable horrors. They involv'd surround
 Thy wide-o'ershadowing throne, whose deep recess
 Blazes with forked light'nings, and beneath
 Rides on pale-streaming meteors. At the sight

BOOK

IV.

V. 49—78.

The moon all-terrified, and stars aghast
 Withdraw their beams, and in their skyey caves
 Escape thy perilous approach. Ere long
 From the low chambers of the south, thy train
 Advances dark, and rolling over heav'n
 Th' enormous wheels of thy cloud-rending car
 Horribly crash tremendous peals, as borne
 With fury irresistible they come
 O'er vaulted skies, that underneath their weight
 Shake as to fall. Thou, unappall'd, erect'st
 Thine arm to heav'n, and on the prostrate world
 Launchest horrific thunders. By thy side
 Destruction sits, and to thy rage supplies
 Arms inexhausted, forked fires, and clouds
 Pregnant with sulph'rous globes, and flying storm
 Of sleet and hails, and meteor-rolling winds,
 Roaring with rainy deluge. Rocks down-dash'd
 Proclaim thy dreadful course, whose skyey tops
 And mountainous-hanging brows with all their woods
 Deciduous rush; unless thy whirlwinds stay
 Their passage in mid air, and there disperse
 Their shatter'd ruins. Promontories fall
 Shiver'd, and ocean from his lowmost bed
 Rages in tumult. Cataracts whelming roar
 Down all the hills, and drown the deep-sunk vales:
 Howl the bleak heaths afar: and nature all,
 Shudd'ring with terror, lies in panic awe;
 While, borne beyond this earth, the wild uproar
 Flies thro' the deep abyss of air, and loud
 Resounding echoes at the fiery gates

BOOK
 IV.

V. 79—108.

Of Surtur's blazing world, that stunn'd with noise
 Start at the sign the mighty habitants.
 Transcendent King, be not this pow'r on us
 Exerted ever ; rather on our foes,
 Bend thy hot vengeance. Still be thou, as wont,
 Our guardian friend. We name thy palace high,
 Refuge from terror ; prove it such to us.
 We vow the plenteous sacrifice of beasts,
 Or if to thee more grateful, ev'n of men,
 Select from captive enemies, or choice
 Of our own heroes, ev'n of mightiest Kings,
 Demanded by thy vengeance, unappeas'd.
 But thou art friendly now : and kind receiv'st
 Less noble victims. So propitious long
 Remain, and gen'rous blessings o'er us show'r."

Book
 IV.

V. 109—137.

Hush'd by degrees, in trembling cadence sunk
 The mingling harps, harmonious ; and awhile
 Echoing applauses, loudly rung, deny'd
 Silence her place. Till now in turn approach
 The sacerdotal band, to great Niord
 Consecrate, God who sways the boundless main.
 Their victims due they lead ; of animals
 Two rapid deer, and three tall hounds, a prize
 Meet for the pow'r who in the active chace
 Delights, and join'd with these, rich-sparkling silks
 And costly-broider'd vests, emblem of wealth,
 Pleasing to him, whose proud dominion yields
 Treasures inestimate to whom he loves.
 These offer'd meek, as wont, and of the flesh

Won by the chace part kept for solemn feasts,
 Soon the due train of Bards in form'd array
 Advance, and striking full the sonant strings
 Thus the stern God in rapt'rous strains extol,

Book
 IV.

V. 138—166.

“ God of the boundless ocean, mighty King,
 Niord, high name, who rul'st the swelling sea,
 Rivers, and waters all, and winds, attend
 Thy honour'd rites. Great is thine awful pow'r.
 Fix'd by the wild sea's shore, on sky-crown'd rocks
 Whence in wide prospect lies the azure deep,
 Thy airy palace hangs, fabric immense
 Of lucid brilliance, where the verdant shine
 Of emerald pillars, mingling-rich, lifts high
 Its starry dome. Along the sapphire tow'rs
 Set o'er its chrystal firmament, far-beam
 Innumerable gems, profuse-inlaid,
 Of hues that deck the show'ry bow of heav'n,
 While branching corals o'er the amber walls
 Fantastic spread their arb'rous shapes, and seem
 Purpureal nascent rubies. Deep within,
 Huge native caves thy dripping chambers form,
 That echo each to each the roaring winds,
 Music delightful, with full swell or fall
 In long succession to thy kingly ear.
 Forth from thy shadowy cells thou com'st, array'd
 In orient pearls, and twining shells, o'erspread
 On thy cerulean robe, and stretching high
 Thy regal sceptre, the loud whirlwinds fly
 Amaz'd: and not a breath disturbs the smooth

And placid bosom of the deep. Thou then
 Pleas'd view'st thy fair dominion, and allur'd
 By the calm splendor of thy liquid plain,
 Feel'st thy heart beat with dalliance, and to mind
 Recall'st thy fav'rite sports, the rapid chace.
 Sports lov'd by heroes too, their fond employ
 After the battle. Then from out thy dens
 Thou bring'st thy weapons, thy tremendous bow,
 Form'd of the hugest pine that brow'd the hills,
 Thy quivers stor'd with masts of vessels wreck'd,
 And pond'rous javelins, mighty oaks, dire-barb'd
 With prows of shatter'd ships. Then launching vast
 Into the fathomless abyss, thou stalk'st
 Low mid the mass of waters, and serene
 Survey'st thy lair afar. The starting whales,
 Who know thy dreadful hand, thou glad pursu'st
 Terrible, swift as air, and from thy arm
 Dashing thy horrid darts, transfixest sheer
 Th' enormous monsters. Floods of sanguine gore
 Purple the sea. Or underneath the isles
 Amid their pillar'd grotts of deep recess
 Thou seekest gems and sea-bred wealth, to deck
 Thy princely mansion, and the glitt'ring vest
 Of Skada thy fair spouse who rather loves
 Her native mountains than thy stormy shores,
 Scarce lur'd by all thy splendor to abide
 Within thy sounding halls. She of thy love
 Secure, compell'd thy frequent interchange
 Of habitation, three successive nights
 Within thy dome marine and sea-beat rocks;

Book
 IV.

V. 167—196.

Nine 'mid the mountains of her mighty Sire
 The great Thiassa. Here thro' howling dens
 Roar thy deep winds, and from their caverns fright
 The savage beasts, while o'er the steepest hills
 And hollow vales thou fly'st, or mid the night
 Stalk'st o'er the forest-tops aloft, and view'st
 By the moon's rays the huge wood-monster laid
 Sleeping, thy destin'd prey, ere earliest dawn
 Shall tinge the trees with 'light. O'er the wide lakes
 Or the broad torrent-stream thou rid'st at ease
 Within thy gliding car, the bright-scal'd fish
 Seizing, that cloth'd in azure-changing gold
 Bask in the sun-transparent waves, or fly
 As arrows swift in vain. But these delights
 Not so attract thee, as thy heaving realm,
 Whither at stated hour thy steps return
 Joyful. Soon ent'ring 'mid thy palace bright,
 Should the wild ocean to its absent King
 Forget allegiance, or thy charge assign'd
 Mad disobey, irascible thou soon
 Assum'st the terrors of Almighty pow'r
 Incens'd. Infuriate thou collect'st thine arms,
 Hurricanes pent in caves, and gloomy fires,
 Meteors, of thunder born, and hail, and rains
 And stormy gust, and in thy cloudy car,
 Of whirlwinds form'd, inwove with darkness, sail'st
 Tremendous o'er the rocks, and on the main
 Dart'st all thy pow'r at once. Th' astonish'd sea
 Ascends in mountain surges to the sky,
 Roll'd upward from unfathomable depths

BOOK
 IV.

V. 197—226.

Book
IV.

With horrible commotion. Islands huge
And drifted rocks, convolving to and fro,
Totter o'erwhelm'd. Fleets, shatter'd, heav'nward dart
On arching waves: down with tremendous crash
Sunk instantaneous to the low'st abyss,
There fix'd, until the next succeeding surge
Upheave around their shiver'd ruins, masts,
And beams, and sails, and floating carcasses
Of men, their crews. Resistless all the sea
Rages afar ungovernable. Earth,
Air, heav'n, convuls'd, th' unspeakable uproar
Commingling swell. Nor ends their wrath, until
Thou satiate, bid'st, and from the horrid waste
Retiring, thou ascend'st thy rocking dome,
Sudden heav'n, ocean, earth, all-calm, repose,
So, if thou wilt, assembled navies ride
Safe o'er the gently-swelling main, and hail
Joyful their destin'd port. Oh! Sovereign King,
Capricious, frail of temper, on our fleets
With heroes fill'd, who own thy mighty pow'r
And thro' the trackless deep thy guiding hand
Ask humble, oh! propitious look, and bend
Hither their destin'd course in full array,
Soon to forsake Dorsetian shores. Oh! send
Prosperous breezes: o'er thy silver waves
Waft them along in peace. For thou can'st smooth
The glassy sea, till its serene expanse
Reflects all colours and mild rays of day,
Glitt'ring as gems: or mid the silent night
Can'st bid the moon and radiant host of stars

Behold another rival sky below,
 And all heav'n's pomp inverted. When our ships
 Stretch their white wings and o'er the azure breast
 Fly of thy softly-rippling waves, may then
 Our mariners exulting own thee good,
 And pointing from the deck thy verdant isles
 Or murm'ring main, exclaim, "how lovely-fair!"
 Thus spare our fleets: and this fair realm subdued,
 Oft may we sail from land to land, and win
 Spoil, treasures, kingdoms, thy proud gifts, reserv'd
 For Heroes sole who know and honour thee."

Book
 IV.

V. 257—264.

Last moves the total train of Bards conjunct,
 And Dames prophetic by the Sov'reign Chiefs
 Accompanied and Leaders from the troops
 Select, advancing all in crowded pomp
 Tow'rd a proud altar, with united praise
 Bent last to yield the tribute of their love
 To Bragé, God of high poetic lays,
 Music, and eloquence. Bards chief-inspir'd,
 And of the Gods prime-favor'd, now advance
 Solemn, and striking rapt the deep-ton'd strings,
 Roll the rich tide of harmony and song.

"God of poetic lays, by heav'n to man
 Benign dispens'd, whom music's sounds, and verse,
 And winning eloquence, obey as Prince,
 Receive thy meed of praise. 'Mid list'ning Gods
 Irradiant seated on thy lofty throne,
 Thou oft, to swell ætherial bliss, and joys

Ineffable diffuse, thy splendid lyre
 Warbling attunest. Silvery-trembling notes
 Float thro' the stiller heav'n, till thy sweet voice,
 Harmonious-blending, lulls each ear divine
 To fond oblivion and mute languishment.
 Valhalla's dome, soft-echoing, breathes around
 Slow-spreading airs, that take the sense surpriz'd
 In list'ning extacy. converse tho' loud
 Drops, sudden. Heroes, pause, and bending calm,
 Lift the pleas'd ear, all to intense delight
 Subdued, and to thy pow'r surrender'd meek:
 Whether thy tender-streaming, soothing falls
 Whisper celestial love; or louder strains,
 Borne in rich pomp along the sounding heav'n,
 O'erwhelm that melting transport, and the soul
 Rouse to high ardor. Then thy sprightly notes
 Wake frolic joy, cheering the sumptuous feast.
 Heroes implor thee to enroll their names
 Proud in thy rapt'rous songs, among the Gods
 Sung frequent, honour sole by emulous deeds
 Atchiev'd of heav'nly war. Thy winning words
 Hold wond'ring Deities in pleas'd suspense
 Hung on thy lips, whose witching eloquence,
 Serene in wisdom, with delicious sway
 Composes ev'ry variance, and allays
 The rising passions to accordant peace.
 Thou own'st th' Almighty Odin's precious gift,
 Source of poetic lays, that drink divine
 Blood of the great Kuaser, Wisdom's Prince,
 (Slain by fell malice of heav'n's envious foes,)

Book
 IV.

V. 285—314.

But by the King of heav'n with peril large **BOOK**
 Sought and obtain'd: then by his gracious hand **IV.**
 Mingled with honey and celestial juice **V. 315-344.**
 Drawn from that Tree, whose rich-fed boughs o'erhang
 Mimer's prophetic stream: and last to thee
 Consign'd, thy sacred ministerial charge.
 Thou of this dear-form'd drink to sons of men,
 Thy favor'd few select, giv'st at their birth,
 Themselves unasking. Whom thy love has chos'n,
 He with a solemn inspiration fir'd
 Grows from his earliest youth: a tender glow
 Extatic thrills along his conscious veins,
 Alive to ev'ry impulse: soothing sad
 His brooded thought: Imagination roams
 Thro' boundless space, and wings her easy flight
 From world to world, while airy pictures stand
 Visible to his raptur'd sight, that bid
 His heav'n-touch'd mouth with answering eloquence
 Sound themes of mightiest import, and awake
 Glory faint-drooping in the doubtful breast;
 And swell heroic rage, and patriot zeal:
 Or terrible alarm the shudd'ring soul;
 Or melt the frame with gentle strains of love
 And tender-weeping pity: or with joy
 Ravish the gayly-beating heart. The soul
 Aw'd and subdued, he with a native pow'r
 Bends to his purpose, and with care implants
 Deep in the op'ning heart the pregnant seeds
 Of virtue, rich-imbued with mellow'd sweets.
 While truth, array'd in numerous measures, falls

Adhesive, as the fresh'ning dews of heav'n.
 Song with immortal glory can surround
 The star-like name of whom it loves; the meed
 Envied of heroes, and by merit won.
 Hence thy lov'd spouse, the fair Iduna, bears
 That never-dying fruit, whose taste confers
 Perpetual youth. Thou from heav'n's King himself,
 Father of magic verse, obtainest oft
 And giv'st to sons of men, favor'd of thee,
 The Runic Rhymes miraculous, whose pow'r
 Can from the dark grave call the mould'ring dead
 Astonish'd back to light, and bid them stand
 Rob'd as with ghastly life, in pristine shape,
 To ope the brooding mysteries of fate
 And deep futurity: or strains that breath'd
 Can in mid tempest hush the roaring winds,
 Still'd to meek Silence: or along the air
 Uplift the charm'd possessor, floating safe
 Thro' darkness, and his uncouth way obscure
 Winnowing amid the pathless infinite.
 Some grav'd on leaves, can heal the poignant pangs
 Of wounds, or pale disease; some fervent-pour'd
 Can charm the hostile sword, ev'n when uprais'd
 To strike some bloody deed, and bid it fall
 All-pow'rless from the spell-struck wearer's hand.
 Some sooth malignant hate, to other charm
 Implacable: or in alluring chain
 Win and preserve the soft-eyed virgin's love.
 Some tell the nature high of ev'ry God
 And Essence spiritual, that animate

BOOK
IV.

V. 345—374.

Nature thro' all her works : or render sweet
 Solitude, till the rich possessor grows
 In dreariest station reconcil'd and blest.
 These fancy-prompted lays alliance near
 Claim fond with music's flowing harmony,
 Thy second precious gift. Thou kindly first
 Bad'st wond'ring man from art-disposed strings
 Or hollow tubes elicit magic sound,
 That breaks with rapture the delighted air,
 And various utters to the human heart
 An universal language, whose free tones
 Wake ev'ry passion in th' according breast.
 Thee owns the lyre its Parent, and soft lute,
 The mellow harp ; the trumpet loud, the shrill
 Clarion, the breathing flute, the bellowing drum,
 And clashing cymbal. Oft in union full
 Commingling, these the solemn pomp of sound
 Roll rich along, majestic, and inspire
 Ardor and high exploits, and fire the rage
 Of tempest-roaring war. Then sadly sweet
 Plains single the meek lyre, or sighing flute,
 And tenderly evokes the silent tear
 To grace some dirge for heroes freshly fall'n,
 When in the cold tomb laid : or whispering soothes,
 With cautious touch, extatic-trembling round,
 Sorrow in saddest mood, and mild averts
 Sullen despair. Then sportive melody
 Rouses the jolly dance and moving grace,
 Or glads the rosy-smiling festal hour,
 And happy nuptial rite, and natal day ;

Book
 IV.

V. 375—404.

Or lulls to tranquil ease disturbed pain.
 Such music's pow'r, these thy so varied strains
 Exalting, melting, ravishing the soul.
 Then thy last gracious meed, not honour'd least
 By noble men, to thy two other gifts
 Congenial, close-assimilant, thy love
 Imparts to chosen favorites: the prize
 Of flowing eloquence, by mightiest chiefs
 Sought eager, and from thee suppliant implor'd.
 For from the graceful lips of whom thy hand
 Pregning has touch'd, persuasion smoothly rolls
 Alluring language, whose rich-moving stream
 Clear, copious, full, o'erpow'rs th' entranced throng
 To meek obedience and attentive awe;
 Drinking those honey'd words, that draw the soul
 Tow'rd the mov'd Orator: prompt still to feel
 Varying emotion, as his gradual swell
 Vehement thunders wrath, and wakes the storm
 Of frenzy-burning battle; or compos'd,
 Solemn his gently-soothing falls appease
 Infuriate multitudes to calm repose.
 Celestial Arts! thy treasur'd, high rewards
 Beneficent indulg'd to human kind!
 Oh! liberal show'r thy envied boons. Diffuse
 To thy prophetic bards, adoring thee,
 Rapturous song, and music's moving strains:
 To mighty chiefs spontaneous eloquence,
 Rousing each passion thro' their list'ning trains.
 So shall thy altars splendid blaze, and thou
 Be crown'd with loftiest honours, while we own

BOOK
IV.

V. 405—434.

One pow'r of music, eloquence, and song."

Book
IV.

V. 435—463.

Now ceas'd the strains mellifluous, and applause
Triumphant rose around: whose echoing swell
Cheer'd the glad bards, and proud-attending chiefs.
Silence expectant floated thro' the air,
As Odin's holy priests now grave advance
To the high altar's verge, and there full seen
Raise loud the solemn voice, and precepts high
Inculcate, giv'n to men by heav'n's great King:
Promising heav'nly love to those alone
Who die in battle; who adore the Gods:
Who faithful cherish friends, and wives, and chiefs,
Revenging all their injuries and deaths;
Who kind and hospitable spread the feast
For welcome trains: who dread far worse than death
The name of Coward. These their moral guides
The multitudes receive with rev'rent awe,
And burn for future battle and to meet
Again the recreant English. Combat fills
Their eager thoughts. With sudden frenzy fir'd,
Many vociferously demand the rites
Of custom'd tournament with captive foes
Ta'en in preceding fight, to augur thence
Success of future war; "fit instruments
" Now sole to yield delight and pleasure high
" In pompous spectacle: since on themselves,
" (To death preferring mean captivity
" Nor plunging in their breast the previous sword),
" They have induc'd foul ignominy, worse

“ Than thousand deaths, or terriblest revenge :
 “ The scorn of ev’ry finger, sole reserv’d
 “ For games, or victims of the sacrifice.”

Book
 IV.

V. 464—491,

The Sov’reign Guthrun, thus demanded, mild
 Answers.—“ Th’ approach of eve invites the feast,
 And praise of bards, becoming noble men,
 Victorious now in battle. Future day,
 Not distant, shall behold proud tournaments
 Fought with our captive foes, omen of fate.—
 Now tow’rd the ready camp our steps return.”

He said, and acquiescent soon, the host
 Prepares to seek the tents. As thus the crowds
 Turn now, that occupy th’ extremer verge,
 Behold ! full-gleaming on their ravish’d sight,
 Wide o’er the nearest hill, standards, and hosts
 Moving in radiant armour, plain advance.
 Swells instantaneous the loud shout of joy.
 The news quick-spreads from mouth to mouth. All fix
 Their eager eyes. “ ’Tis Kelwulf, Kelwulf,” all
 Exulting echo. Pouring o’er the hill,
 Lo ! steeds and banners, shields and flashing spears,
 Innumerable in succession, rush to view.
 Bright in the setting sun, the splendid trains
 Shone as they moved along, like rolling fires
 Ravaging broad some woody vale, and borne
 Onward in spreading volumes by the wind.
 Swift they advanc’d, but silent. Sounds of bards
 Or echoing strains none rose. Resounds the earth

Under their thronging feet, as swells the roar
 Of thunder rolling distant. Larger now
 They spread upon the sight, and cross the vale
 Contiguous, and ascend the champaign wide
 In deep procession of immeasur'd length.

Book
 IV.

V. 492—520.

Supreme in eminence in front appear'd
 Kelwulf their haughty leader, as he came
 Majestic borne upon his coal-black steed,
 Noble in aspect: but downcast he seem'd,
 And his fix'd look, beneath his bending casque,
 Sullenly eyed the ground. Nor splendor less
 Adorn'd his stature than might well become
 Mightiest monarch. Shield inlaid with gold,
 And pliant mail, with golden tissue wrought,
 Hung mantling o'er him: his huge breast-plate flam'd
 Auriferous, and around his plumed helm
 Glitter'd a kingly diadem. Nor there
 Shone not the regal tufas, near upborne
 Royalty's waving ensigns: while aloft
 Floated along the air in spreading folds
 Imperial standards, pompous, rolling broad
 Their ostentatious pageantry: a train
 Of mighty chieftains near their titled King
 Follow'd, less decorate in arms, but proud
 Bounding on warlike, richly-mantled steeds.
 Thus as their van approach'd, the Danish King
 Commands his circling troops to ope meet space,
 Thro' which may pass the coming host and reach
 The lofty altars, where selected chiefs

Exalted stand. They at his word dispart
 Instant their thronging files, and soon present
 Double array, whose farther, curved ranks
 Elliptic met, and full to view display'd
 Within th' inclosing range, the pillar'd mound,
 High-crown'd with martial state. The sov'reign King
 Waves in mid air his outstretch'd spear, to guide
 Th' advancing army's course. They conscious bend
 Thither their hast'ning bands, and enter soon
 Th' expectant hosts, rang'd opposite.

Book
 IV.

V. 521—550.

As thus
 Pass'd on the summon'd pow'rs, from either side
 Insulting hisses rose, and hostile scorn,
 Rude laughs, and taunts illib'ral, which they bore,
 Not daring to resent. Too well their chief
 Knew that revenge upon the lowest slave
 Among the Danish ranks, would soon induce
 On his whole people signal fate, o'erwhelm'd
 In universal massacre. He knew,
 And prudent had forewarn'd his legion trains
 Patient to bear all insult, as the sole
 Hope of escape or pledge of safe return.
 Grief mark'd each English count'nance, and despair
 Gleam'd in their piteous eyes, now to observe
 Themselves thus sad-enslav'd, to cruel scorn
 Passive expos'd, and 'gainst their country thus
 Compell'd in arms: but all remember'd well
 Their titled Sov'reign's monitory words,
 When grieving he convok'd his numerous pow'rs,
 Call'd by the Danish mandate, and had left,

Penitent, mournful, his disturbed throne
 To join the war. Nor did they now withhold
 Obedience: conscious that their utmost aid
 Should they refuse, soon had their country own'd
 Horrors insufferable: Mercia's wide
 And fertile province soon resistless whelm'd
 In ruinous waste; and them, their wives, and babes
 Ras'd by the sword. Thus pass'd they gloomy on,
 Till their broad van arriv'd the pillar'd height
 Where stood the kingly generals. Stops the host
 In long array, by due command, afar
 Repeated.

Book
 IV.

V. 551—580.

Oskital impatient, now
 First breaks the solemn silence, and accosts
 Imperious thus their Vassal-Prince. "What spoil
 Bring ye from those rich provinces, so late
 Cross'd in your journey, and what numbers swell
 Your summon'd legions?"

Kelwulf bending low

Mild answers. "Noble Sov'reigns, as we bent
 Hither our rapid course, we found the land
 Evacuate by the natives, terrified
 With fame of our approach, and from our steps
 Fled previous, with them borne whate'er could yield
 Sustenance, or admit removal. Gone
 Thus from their homes, of shelter destitute,
 We know not whither they have fled or sought
 Refuge, unless with Alfred's armed host.
 Therefore we bring no spoil, the plunder'd waste
 Of countries left: but from our province lead

What force and numbers could be well conven'd
 From countries wide, yet rare of habitants,
 Thin'd by continuous slaughter, and the waste
 Of ceaseless ravages o'er all the plains;
 Which dreadful scourges, blended, have destroy'd
 Multitudes, else convok'd to aid your war."

Book
 IV.

V. 381—608.

With this response unsatisfied, the fierce
 Oskital quick rejoins: "I mark your mind: you come
 Destitute then of spoil, which we ourselves
 Had fail'd not to amass in progress, long
 As your's. Ye wish not to oppress, or hurt
 Your countrymen, but studious seek to screen
 From injury, and suffer to escape
 With all that they possess, rather than bring
 Riches to us, your masters. But attend
 My words, the words of every Dane in me.
 If henceforth ye exert not all your force,
 Conjoint with us, to spoil and sack this realm
 Victorious still in battle: on that day
 When faint ye shrink, or coward turn from fight
 That day, no longer deem'd our friends, and spar'd
 To till our lands, and serve our wars and feasts,
 We hold you mortal foes, and on you turn
 Unconquerable arms, o'erwhelming soon
 In spareless carnage all your traitor-pow'rs."

Scarce had he ceas'd, when hideous clamour rose
 Unanimous from all the Danish bands,
 Dreadful, as when in famish'd Indian wilds

Troops of assembling tygers, mad for blood, Book
 Prepare in one innumerable host to pour IV.
 On villages and haunts of men, what time v. 609—636.
 The natives list, aghast, at dead midnight
 The swelling thunder of their distant roars,
 And prompt to save their homes, themselves, their babes,
 Spread sudden all the land with blazing fires.

Nor unalarm'd the English hear their fate
 Menac'd, whom next the Sov'reign Guthrun thus
 More mild accosts. "Henceforth your forces rest
 Subject to my supreme command, yourselves
 Still their immediate leaders. Now with us
 Turn your prompt march tow'rd our capacious camp,
 There to enjoy feasts and the songs of bards,
 Revels and triumph, the deserv'd reward
 Of our magnific victory, and to you
 Refreshing solace of fatigue and toil,
 Earnest of future pleasures, glories high,
 To be achiev'd by battles with our foes,
 Till we subdue this kingdom, and enjoy
 All as our own, its habitants our slaves."

Strait all the Danish hosts, with Ketwulf's bands
 Tow'rd the wide camp direct their sounding march.
 O'er them innumerable ensigns splendid wav'd
 Their martial blazonry, and loud the blair
 Of thousand trumpets the deep tumult swell'd
 Of warlike instruments, concordant roll'd
 Thro' the full air. Shouts rose of madd'ning hosts

Triumphant, oft invoking Gods to mark
 Their mighty pow'rs and terrible array.
 Thus as they move, the Danish hosts aloud
 Deride their new associate peers; and brand
 With ignominious names of; "Christians, slaves
 Mean, coward Infidels. War, war alone
 Becomes brave heroes. But your Sov'reign burns
 To 'stablish peace, and war's celestial joys
 Eternally exclude. He sole inspires
 Submission calm to laws, and doting priests
 School'd in some vain religion, servile, poor,
 Fitted for souls like your's, You shew old men
 Grey hair'd amid your ranks, decrepit, worn,
 Whom soon disease will drag into the grave,
 Sinking in helpless weakness! Look thro' us;
 We sole display young heroes, fresh, robust,
 Gigantic, apt for battle. All the rest
 Are prematurely gone to heav'n's high King,
 Swords in their hands. But come, enjoy at last
 The glorious honour of becoming men.
 Burn henceforth, if you dare, to end your lives
 Amid the hottest fight. Renounce, forget
 Your base religion, and by worthy deeds
 Seek to conciliate Odin, and tho' late
 Win proud admission to his happy halls.
 But tho' ye love not war, be vallant now,
 Else—you have heard the King—his threats are true.
 Insulted thus the English legions pass
 Amid th' exulting Danes, who march along

Book

IV.

V. 637—668.

In frantic tumult, singing Odin's name,
 The joys of valour, the contempt of death.
 Clarions and thousand martial sounds incense
 Their emulous rage, while in responsive strains
 They utter rapt'rous songs of ancient bards,
 Familiar in each mouth, from sire to son
 Traditionally taught. Chanting in strains
 Alternately, confus'd, with hideous noise
 Now they arrive the camp, and entering soon
 In long succession, thro' the crowded tents
 Disperse, all conscious of their order'd place.
 Separate the English bands in station ope
 And less commodious find abode. Near these
 Are fix'd the hapless train of pris'ners, ta'en
 In the last battle, who dishonour'd place
 Share now with oxen, and the spoil of beasts.
 A fame had pass'd that Guthrun had design'd
 To form incarcerating hovels, best
 To yield the captives shelter; now they stood
 Bound in ignoble chains to massive stones
 Or trees. The Mercians with regret survey
 Many their captive countrymen, whom once
 They knew in other station, ere revolt
 Parted their union. These in misery now
 They could not, nor had dar'd, relieve. When these
 Mark Kelwulf, the proud chief, once favor'd high
 In Alfred's faithful host, with mournful looks
 And sad expressive gestures they deplore
 His fatal conduct, and his power enslav'd
 Nor seem'd he callous or unmov'd: as thus

Book
 IV:

V. 666—695.

He caught their mien, involuntary tears
 Suffus'd his eyes, which his averted face
 Soon hid from sight. To him in pensive mood
 Thus occupied, near his chief captains, now
 Deputed heralds invitation high
 Bring from the Sov'reign Leaders to attend
 Appointed feast in Guthrun's kingly tent;
 Thus to partake a night to gen'ral joy
 Devoted, honour'd as the martial peers
 Of noblest Danes, by condescending grace.
 The chiefs with sad obeisance bow, and meek
 Receive the kingly message, promising
 Observance due.

BOOK
 IV.

V. 696—725.

Thro' all the eager camp
 Festivals now begun proclaim the shades
 Of eve advancing fast. The spacious tents
 Are universal throng'd with armed guests,
 Rang'd in their several bands. Down by their sides
 Repose their pond'rous shields, and round the tents
 Rest their tall spears, while seated they surround
 The crowded tables, loaded with the flesh
 Of oxen, boars, and deer, which they devour
 In meals enormous. Matrons, virgins fair,
 Willing attend, and to their hands present
 Frequent the mighty skull, with flowing beer
 Crown'd, and exulting quaff'd with ardent vows
 Of fury on the foe, or mention proud
 Of noble captains, or remembrance sad
 Of fallen friends. Impatient all aspire
 For future battle, and already part

England's rich southern province as their own,
 The rest subdued:—on Alfred they devote
 Vengeance, and fond renew their former vows,
 To equal their high chiefs in valour: them
 Not to survive, but enter in their train
 The hall of Odin: furious to avenge
 Each other's death: to face five foes: to shrink
 Never from death, but smiling court its wound.
 Bards pass around, and sing in raptur'd strains
 The praise of all the brave, denouncing stern
 The dreadful doom of cowards. All the camp
 Resounds afar with revels, and their loud
 Carousal, warlike songs, and savage howls,
 That hill and valley echo round:

BOOK
 IV.

V. 726—755.

Nor less

Festivity now reigns amid the tent
 Regal of mighty Guthrun, hung around
 With armour, shields, and scalps of slain; here, met
 In high assemblage, all the sov'reign Kings,
 Guthrun, and Oskital, and Amund sat;
 Attended by their numerous-thronging chiefs,
 Noblest and greatest, and a stately train
 Of royal-vested bards, and sacred priests
 Consecrate to each higher God; and these
 Augmenting, Kelwulf's princely company
 Of Mercian chiefs rang'd intermix'd. But he
 Amid his ample train sat mute, and seem'd
 Pensive, nor cheerful, tho' the table rang
 With revelry, while plenteous viands spread
 Its wide extent, of ven'son and the flesh

Reserv'd from sacred rites; and hydromel, **BOOK**
 And luscious mead, and gen'rous wines, around **IV.**
 Pass'd copiously in polish'd goblets, form'd **V. 756-785.**
 Of art-deck'd skulls; curious inlaid with gold
 And graceful serv'd by smiling virgins, chos'n
 From all most beauteous; waking joy and love.
 Guthrun in highest place amid his bards
 Oft rising fills an ample skull, and drinks
 To Odin's honour for proud victory;
 To Frea for the mead of plenty, Thor
 For genial seasons, and to other Gods
 Successive. Then the memory fond recalls
 Of warriors fall'n in battle, and the cup
 Quaffs to their praise. Heroes and Virgins sing
 Alternate verses, the politer mark
 Esteem'd of gallantry; and fondly learnt
 In hours of peace. Wives animate and cheer
 Their wounded husbands to renew'd assaults
 In future war, and to their valour bear
 Proud-envied testimony; giv'n to none
 Reproaches, fear'd by heroes worse than death:
 And vow to educate their infant sons
 In their forefathers' steps. Young warriors boast
 Now of their skill in songs of fame, what stars
 They know by name to guide their trackless course
 Amid the foamy deep: how well they swim,
 Or fly across the ice on sounding skates:
 Anticipate an early death, and tell
 The various pleasures of heav'n's palaces,
 Burning for future war: meanwhile they vow

To ravage all the land: deride their foes
 And Alfred: Oskital extolling high
 For leagues of peace infrig'd.

Book

IV.

V. 786—815.

Arrogant now

Oskital boasts the merit to have broke
 Treaties, ignobly wrested, and his hate
 Pers'nal of Alfred loud declares: whom much
 He scorns that his too credulous faith should deem
 Heroic souls could e'er be bound by oaths
 Invoking Christian Gods. Henceforth remains
 For Alfred to admire what heroes dare:
 When rallying once again his shatter'd pow'rs,
 He leads them to slaughter, till his mad
 Insatiate folly back-learn at last, how vain
 Against th' omnipotent to threaten war.

To whom in answer Guthrun tells, that soon
 The foe shall meet fair war in open field
 Where they may fall like heroes, and the Danes
 Swell Odin's legions: prays it may even
 The lot or of himself or other King
 Alfred to meet in single fight, and try
 The prowess of his arm: for he alone
 Remains the bulwark of the English host,
 Else shrinking still from hard contest: he sole
 By equal skill and courage rules and guides
 The universal army, whom success,
 Him absent, ne'er could favor; nor on land
 Nor on the main: on both, the English pow'rs
 Shall soon be prov'd. The puissant Danish fleet

Equipp'd in men and numbers no assault
 Need fear from Alfred's meaner squadron, poor
 In seamen as in force, to lowest state
 Reduc'd, ere he its slumb'ring strength reviv'd.

Book
 IV.

V. 816—834.

Now Amund celebrates the rapt'rous joys
 Of splendid festivals like these, the meed
 Of glorious war: boasts if himself could meet
 Alfred in fight, the English monarch's crown
 Cleft should deciduous vanish, and his skull
 Soon pendent on his own broad belt, the next
 Proud feast should see chang'd to a drinking-cup,
 Quaff'd by each noble mouth. Such converse holds
 Th' exulting chieftains, till the solemn bards
 Raise now th' expected rhapsodies of praise
 On loud-rung harps, swell'd by their trancing voice,
 Recording mighty deeds, which their own eyes
 Have witness'd, while their magic diction rolls
 Poetic ardor, and the fervid glow
 Of sacred inspiration: moving deep
 Each yielded heart. Alternate they resound
 Guthrun, the great, the kingly hero; good,
 And fav'rite high of Gods: Oskital bold,
 Valiant, the wealthy Sov'reign; Amund brave,
 Noble and free, the warrior's gen'rous friend,
 The soul of feasts, the thunder of the field:
 Inexorable Hubba, stern, unmov'd
 In direst danger: Hinguar, his compeer,
 Skill'd in the magic Reafen, worthy son
 Of the proud monarch Regner, who in death

Laugh'd joyful; Haldene pensive, but in war : **Book**
 Insatiate: Frena, friend of liberty, **IV.**
 Hater of tyrants: Sidroc, in the field **V. 836—864.**
 Terrible, nor in armed ships a foe
 Less dread, or skill'd. These noble names, conjunct
 With many a chief and potent thane, their songs
 Echo: and rouse the patriot flame, and love
 Unsatisfied of glory: then the Gods,
 Hymn'd solemn, win attentive awe: the chance
 Dangers and conduct of the last proud field
 Commemorated ravish every ear.

Thus wore the night, while all the joyous camp
 Commit each wild excess, deeming to please
 The Gods, invok'd by ev'ry warrior now
 And pictur'd to each fancy visibly
 In various ensigns and abodes. Such faith
 Familiar knowledge of their pow'rs divine,
 Taught by the bards, inspir'd. All madly vow
 To wake like revels, from the plunder'd waste
 Of provinces adjacent, till the day
 Dawn of wish'd battle with the hostile ranks
 Hither approach'd.

At length by slow degrees
 The camp grows hush'd; the feasts dissolve; the men
 Retiring to their tents, seek each the bed
 Of their oft-varied spouse. Chiefs own a train
 (Custom allow'd, and mark of honour deem'd)
 Of beauteous females, emulous to win
 Their constant love, wild-ranging, nor confin'd

To one in tender union, but the glow
 Of lawless nature. Wives their infant sons
 Nurture to deeds of arms, and fond inure
 To scenes of blood, ere yet their unus'd limbs
 Can wield the spear, or bear the weighty mail.
 Their daughters, bred alike to wounds and death
 Attentive learn to staunch the throbbing wounds
 Of father, brother, friend, physicians sole,
 And honour'd as divine. Now faint arise
 The sounds of mirth, and night to sleep resigns
 Her o'er-drench'd revellers.

BOOK
 IV.

V. 865—894.

But not to sleep
 Kelwulf retir'd: he in his tent awake,
 At midnight amid dim and silent gloom
 Lab'ring with anguish and the poignant sense
 Of deep regret, held with a Mercian chief,
 Young, true, and by the rebel-sov'reign lov'd,
 Sad conference: and to him his burthen'd soul
 Thus open'd.

“ Wretched man: what then avails
 Kingdom or pow'r to me, tho' I possess
 The sway I sought. Unworthy, I forsook
 My country, friends affectionate, and high
 Respect and favour of my rightful King,
 To win a miserable throne. Vain hope!
 Forsaken thus of happiness, the love
 Of virtuous heroes, and my own esteem.
 The slave of cruel enemies: compell'd
 Against my country thus to rise in arms:
 To slay my countrymen, my former friends,

To persecute religion, and induce
 Dire Pagan horrors, war and tyranny,
 And spread eternal ruin o'er the land.
 Appalling thoughts! oh! could I yet become
 What once I was! could I again return
 'To duty, and my country's rights defend!—
 But no! it cannot be.—How could I face
 My injur'd countrymen? or with what eyes
 Could they receive me? pointed but with sneers
 By all the common troops whom I so late
 Commanded!—How should I behold the King,
 To me so kind, or Rayner, to my heart
 Once dear as life, whom I ungrateful left,
 And from their cause seduc'd so many, now
 Involv'd in equal misery?—Oh! that shame
 I could not bear: the dread, distracting thought
 Terrifies me. No! I must still support
 My present lost condition, and fight on,
 Detested and despis'd by all the good:
 The scorn, the slave of tyrant foes: and die
 At last ignobly, by no tender tear
 Wept, nor repos'd within an honour'd tomb
 By the kind hand of love. No bards will give
 My name to future times, but with disgust
 Turn from my mention, or will warn alone
 Others to shun my treachery. Oh! my friend,
 Too faithful Bernulph, my o'erloaded heart
 Sinks faint within me, stung with conscious pangs
 Intolerable—lost—”

He spoke, and lean'd

Book
IV.

V. 895—924

Silent upon the youthful hero's neck,
 While long-drawn sighs, deep-heav'd, bespoke a heart
 Sore-charg'd. The gen'rous youth was mov'd, and felt
 Compassion's melting influence. "Say not, lost,"
 With cheering voice he added, "but resume
 Courage, and wait compos'd a change of fate.
 What chieftain more his followers' zealous love
 Possesses dearer than yourself, who all
 Are ready to devote their lives to save
 Their Leader? Sov'reign now, acknowledg'd such
 By all. They mark not, nor thus deeply feel
 Their country's sufferings, happy to obtain
 Sustenance glad, and win their Sov'reign's love."

Not thus appeas'd, his heart-felt speech resumes
Th' unhappy Kelwulf. " Oh ! that I alike
Had been some common soldier, to the will
Subservient of my chief, nor with high pow'r
Invested, whose fair-tempting semblance won
Me from fidelity ! How glad would I
Now yield up all my titled state, and be
As one of them, might I again redeem
Forfeited honour, and by good men lov'd,
Die as an honest man, my country's cause
Bravely defending ! But just heav'n decrees
My punishment. I see, and strongly feel
My country's miserable state, denied
Now ever to afford my treacherous aid.
All will abhor me, while with grateful praise
Posterity and all th' admiring land

Shall bless the host of Alfred, scorning still
 My rebel pow'rs. Tho' with their present state
 Content, they reck not now their future woes,
 What reparation can I make to men
 Once good and faithful? now by me seduc'd
 From duty's virtuous path, thro' love to me
 And faith abus'd, who with their future sons
 Down to posterity must now become
 Wretched thro' me: henceforth of slaught'rous war
 The ceaseless victims, in disorder fell
 And savage superstition lost: no peace,
 No arts, no laws, to sweeten and endear
 This transient life, or win immortal joys:
 But instruments of dire destruction made
 On their own inn'cent country, and the slaves
 Of whom they can but hate: whom now my soul
 Utter abhors, with indignation full:
 Nor without ample cause. My tender wife—
 Oh! why recall the dread idea!—She—
 My amiable wife—how do I bear
 To speak that sacred name?—she knew and oft
 Would warn my proud ambition, while I form'd
 High, aggrandizing schemes. If I withdrew
 From Alfred's host my numerous-banded pow'rs
 And own'd the Danish sway, the proffer'd meed
 Promis'd by traitorous Oskital, was ev'n
 Mercia's imperial sceptre. What could then
 Deter me, or restrain, thus blind, and led
 By phantoms of insatiate pow'r and mad
 Ambition? I receiv'd the dazzling terms:

Book

IV.

V. 953—984.

Betroth'd my only daughter, beauteous, young,
 And innocent, to be the destin'd bride
 Of some high Danish chief. But heav'n abhorr'd
 Contracts so infamous, and to itself
 Call'd her in sudden death; while I on wars
 Roaming abroad, her splendid nuptial lot
 Deep-meditated. Scarce on my new throne
 Seated, and with the mockery of state
 Invested, ere the savage Danes despis'd
 My titled royalty. In pure contempt
 Of this my fancied sway, the wretches dar'd
 At dead of night, t' assail my sleeping dome
 With hostile fire, and by th' avenging doom
 Of heav'n (for ever on my head to heap
 Affliction, and my treacherous guilt confound)
 Ev'n from my side my amiable wife
 Tore merciless.—My cries, my pray'rs were vain;
 Mock'd but with scorn. I saw the barb'rous sword
 Plung'd in her bosom. Lost in mute despair,
 I clasp'd her dying limbs; her parting breath
 Drank with my lips, while she these latest words
 Sigh'd out—"My daughter—is"—Death chok'd the rest.
 Oh! this terrific picture often haunts
 My soul, and me with folly dread upbraids.
 My suff'rings all are merited, and I
 Bear patient all: but deep within me springs
 Implacable abhorrence of a foe,
 Savage as this, that in my bosom swells
 Secret desire insatiate, to avert
 My country's mis'ries, and these horrid men

Book.

IV.

V. 983—1014.

Total extirpate.—Could I e'er myself
 Reign single, then methinks my wish, my pow'r,
 Would render England happier, and myself
 Belov'd by virtuous men, while I perform'd
 Good actions ere I die.—But why indulge
 Vain thoughts like these? No! we must now be slaves
 Eternally; and I the dreadful doom
 Cannot prevent, or flee. My people else
 (Mine do I call them?) in the mad attempt,
 Soon in one common heap were murder'd all."

Book
 IV.

V. 1013—1019

Deep-struck, the friendly Bernulph heard the grief
 Of his repentant chief secret-reveal'd,
 And trusty thus adjoins: "Let not the air
 Whisper of these your feelings, or your mien
 Bewray your inward heart: else sure that fate
 Which tenderly you deprecate, will fall
 On you, on me, and all your subject powers;
 Spar'd not by cruel Oskital, but doom'd
 With just pretext to glut his wanton ire:
 Safe in my heart your words have sunk, and there
 Brooding shall lie conceal'd, till prosperous time
 Wing them with action meet, and full revenge
 Burst on th' infernal foe. Henceforth with me
 Confide your inmost thoughts, so lightlier borne
 Partaken, nor o'ercharging thus your heart.—
 Now part we strait to unsuspected sleep."

He said, and separating, each retir'd
 To his own thoughtful couch, while dismal night

Now o'er the world her masked mysteries led,
 And all was hush'd in silent rest, save when
 The dark'ning blasts roll'd hollow o'er the sky,
 Thro' which at times the reeling stars swift gleam'd,
 As in alarmed haste. Conscious they seem'd
 Of some portentous terror seen below.
 Nor were not dreadful horrors wak'd: for now,
 Hid in the womb obscure of hov'ring clouds,
 The prince of darkness thro' the sullen air
 Pass'd with his congregated pow'rs; and eyed
 Cautious the English camp, conspiring fierce
 Imaginations, and unutter'd schemes
 Of deadliest import. He arous'd to rage
 And aggravated malice, bore in mind
 The angels' interposing pow'r, which sav'd
 England from total ruin: and revenge
 Burnt in his tortur'd soul. With studious ken
 He had observ'd the scenes that late employ'd
 The Danish hosts: their strange religious rites,
 Their savage tempers, their commuted vows
 To conquer England, and Christ's peaceful faith
 Total extirpate. Sore-disturb'd and big
 With meditated wiles, th' infernal King
 Convokes his dark colleagues to distance far
 Beyond the Pagan camp, so to escape
 All observation, and his secret thoughts
 Deep with conspiracy there safe unfold.
 Now amid hideous night inclos'd, and far
 Shadow'd by gather'd storms, whose view forebode
 Approach, hell's haughty Monarch thus display'd

Book
 IV.

V. 1043—1072

His purpos'd soul.

“ Princes of hell, and pow'rs

Mighty to stand against heav'n's armed hosts,
 Listen my ponder'd meditations. Sad
 And rack'd with indignation, we have seen
 Angelic pow'rs by subtlest art defeat
 Designs by us matur'd, which else had won
 England in conquest irresistible
 Thro' all her provinces, and full-o'erwhelm'd
 Her sole defensive host. Whence we ere long
 Easy had then accomplish'd plans, before
 Concerted : here to colonize the Danes,
 And found idolatry, eternal wars,
 Ruin and murder : and for ever crush
 Christ's meek religion, now throughout the earth
 Wide-spreading, gaining root, and threat'ning thus
 To rob us of a subject race of men,
 Doom'd else to people hell ; unless our arm
 Can stop its progress, and our own proud sway
 Maintain superior. True ; oppos'd and check'd
 Thus by the arts and pow'r of angel-slaves
 Descended to its aid from heav'n's proud courts,
 Not without toil we win dominion high,
 Yet these are fear'd not, nor endur'd by spirits
 Great, haughty, potent, whom my honour'd reign
 Boasts to command in hell. Wherefore my fix'd
 Resolve is to oppose with ampler pow'r
 Their utmost opposition, and effect
 Certain our labour'd purpose. Soonest then
 To win these vast atchievements, my intent

Book
 IV.

V. 1073—1108

Delib'rate deems from hell's dark realms to fetch
 Hither my fiercest spirits, whose deep malice
 Unknown to our exulting foes, shall swell
 Fuller our present numbers. Nor delay
 Shall intervene, ere from the murky dens
 And fiery regions of th' infernal world,
 Assembling legions hither shall conjoin
 Pow'r adequate, and to that angel-crew
 Shall prove my former threats not vain, when they
 See on themselves tremendous fury pour'd
 And vengeance diabolical, which soon,
 Their meaner might excelling, shall defeat
 Their subtlest machinations, and secure
 Our empire large, and all our proud designs.
 Great is this embassy, of import high
 Demanding weightiest confidence: assign'd
 Therefore to no weak hand, but I myself
 Will undertake the solemn charge. Direct
 Hence parting, I will sail from off this earth
 Thro' the round universe, with stars, or suns,
 Or worlds, innumerable fill'd, until beyond
 Creation's utmost limits, I arrive
 That chaos dire of matter uncreate,
 In which, amid the infinite of space
 Yet uninhabited, desolate, dark,
 Lies hid my own dread world, whose regions wide
 Own me their Sov'reign Monarch, and my throne,
 Shrin'd in majestic darkness, or involv'd
 In rays of gloomy fire, high-lifts its state
 And holds in subject awe a race of spirits

Book
IV.

V. 1103—1132

Noble and bold, once habitants of heav'n.
 Their populous numbers shall ere long be swell'd
 With countless legions of the race of men
 Borne thither from this earth, after sure death
 Has clos'd their sinful life, which we must strive
 Therefore by strong temptations to involve
 In habits long of evil, and withdraw
 Ever from good, while we our hid design
 Veil with a shew of pleasure and delight,
 Bait easily attracting foolish men
 In this probationary state. True, some
 Aware, will 'scape our wiliest arts: but these
 Shall not be many. So alluring we
 Will hold the trancing snares, that their embrace,
 Tho' under semblance beautiful, shall prove
 The gulph of death and hell. Collecting soon
 Spirits most subtle and malignant, I
 Will with these pow'rs return to earth, and proud
 Rejoin your waiting counsels: ready then
 On our astonish'd foes to burst, and vent
 Terrors yet unimagin'd, that shall strike
 Angels in dumb amaze, unconscious whence
 We draw these horrors and portentous arts.
 Meanwhile proceed ye your assistant skill
 T' exert in guarding these our Danes. Delude,
 Deceive, as best ye may, th' angelic bands,
 Now eagerly employ'd the English host
 To re-assemble, and their shatter'd force
 Augment. No operations high as yet
 Will need my presence.—Alfred's chiefs are gone

Book
 IV.

V. 1133—1162

Each to his province, there to band new aids
 Who may recruit their ruin'd pow'rs: the toil
 Not of a day. Himself the English King
 Occupied to instruct a peasant train
 To deeds of arms, not yet his waited host
 Will lead tow'rd these the future fields of blood.
 Here will inactive rest th' exulting Danes,
 Refresh'd by feasts and martial sports. Yourselves
 Suffice to shield, till my return, whate'er
 Of harm immediate our unwary foes
 Might plot against our camp, both armies now
 Pausing, thro' objects various. While I
 On more important cares and high designs
 Am call'd awhile. Be vigilant: remain
 Firm in your station, and abandon fear.
 Now leave me unattended, while I part
 In secret, and elude th' angelic watch."

BOOK
 IV.

V. 1163—1191

He spoke: his wicked legions high applaud
 His wisdom and sublime intent: and soon
 Obey his mighty mandate; slow along
 Removing their dark-volum'd shapes. Immense
 Diffus'd away, obscure in night, unseen,
 Likest some cloudy storm, th' infernal King
 Pass'd awful, soon mysterious-lost, while rais'd
 Aloft on outspread wings 'mid seeming winds
 And trailing meteors, artful-form'd, he flew
 With swiftness inconceivable beyond
 Terrestrial gaze, steering his wond'rous course
 Thro' all creation tow'rd his own dread world:

ARGUMENT OF BOOK V.

Satan arrives at his world, which he traverses. Its terrors described. He ascends his throne; then convoking all the infernal spirits, he explains to them the reason of his coming, and declares that new and more subtle powers are necessary to be employed against the angels. They refer the machination of these to himself. He then advises that a new legion shall return with him to earth, who shall assume the shapes and attributes of the Pagan Deities, in whom the Danes believe, and shall appear to them, as occasion may require, in order to heighten their fury and enthusiasm for battles. This counsel approved, he selects a new legion, who fly with Satan through hell, and at last arrive at the outer boundary or wall of the chaos, within which hell lay. Satan and his host pass through a long and dangerous cave or passage, which had been wrought through chaos by the labour of the demons, opposite man's earth. They stop at its entrance, and after awhile planning their voyage, involve themselves in darkness, and in the semblance of a cloud are driven through the universe, till they plunge amidst the sea, within which they remain a short time. Then discovering England, they join the other infernal powers whom Satan had left. Satan immediately proceeds to execute his purposes of illusion, and appears to the whole Danish army in the shape of Odin, the God of war, exciting them by his gestures to battles and devastation. The Danes are rendered ungovernably furious, which the angels observing, discover at length the deceits of Satan and his new forces. Michael the supreme archangel considers the angelic powers insufficient to contend with them, and therefore, that it has become necessary for him to depart to heaven to fetch a new band of angels. After leaving directions to his associates for their conduct in his absence, Michael departs with a train of attendants to heaven.

ALFRED.

BOOK V.

V. 1—19.

MEANWHILE th' infernal Monarch, on his flight
Arriv'd within his dreadful world, explor'd
The hidden region where exalted stood
His vast-o'ershadowing throne : but while aloft,
Floating on buoyant wings, he urg'd his way
Amid th' illimitable dark, no beam
Gleaming from off a waste of ghastly fire
Piloted sure his course. For thro' that world,
Form'd in the deepest womb of chaos, all
Was horrid and confus'd, wild, desart, dire.
The hand of THE ETERNAL, perfect-pure,
Was pain'd, nor could endure to form throughout
A world where all must be impure and evil,
Fit for its bad possessors, where alone
Justice to mercy could allow no part.
Here chaos with tumultuous dissonance
Roar'd, furious to be thus displac'd, whose din
Disturb'd the ear of Satan, as he sail'd
Silent beneath a boundless firmament :

Not arch'd, as he beheld man's glorious sky,
 But one drear plain, a pitchy canopy,
 Shapeless, and without end, stretching away
 On ev'ry side, beyond his utmost ken.
 There stationary oft he hung, aghast,
 And mark'd if no apparent moon or star,
 Or what seem'd such, roll'd in that firmament,
 Whose glimm'ring view might yield a guiding ray.
 But never yet wan moon or twinkling star
 There own'd a place; nor ever cheerful dawn
 Spread forth her bright pavilion in the east,
 Announcing proud a golden sun's approach.
 Terror is there the firmament, who high
 Hov'ring for ever, her vast iron wings
 Spreads out from pole to pole, involving all
 That obscure world, thence scattering ceaseless down
 Horrible shades; and from her thousand mouths,
 Awfully silent, hid, more pois'nous fell
 Than deadliest Upas, thro' the murky air
 Breathes misery.

Low beneath him Satan sees
 Vast lakes, or seas irregular, of fire
 Impure, with elements commingled crude,
 Essence combustible and sulphurous spume;
 Whose latent seeds, exhaustless-blending, each
 From each supported, in impetuous rage
 Conflicting, torn, with dark-expanded surge
 For ever swelling roar'd. Ascending slow
 From off their fiery surface, volumes vast
 Of smoke in sullen and successive trains,

Book
 V.

V. 20—49.

Diffus'd afar, for this world heap'd aloft
 Clouds that distill'd not dews or rain, but all
 Pregnant with death. The solid continent
 That seem'd as land, was sole a nameless heap
 Of unessential matter, to the feet
 Faithless, and like some quicksand waste, or dross
 Of scorch'd bituminous lava, hollow-stor'd
 With hot materials: yet not less uprear'd
 Mountains immense aloft, whose flamy bulk
 Hideous, or curling tops, upborne amid
 Those smould'ring clouds, their flying King in vain
 Sought now to trace, yet faint he might discern
 Dreadful impending crags on high, that still
 Totter'd and rock'd, and ev'ry moment seem'd
 Descending with resistless death to crush
 Th' incautious wanderer.

Hurrying thence appall'd

He glides away, when thro' the devious void
 Urging his haggard track, sudden, unlook'd,
 A suffocating vapour from below
 Repels him struck, and warns him to recede
 That dreadful place; for conscious now he hangs
 O'er horrid precipices, vacuous, vast,
 Of depth unknown: since never yet in hell
 Spirit audacious had been found, who dar'd
 By downward flight precipitate explore
 What horrible contents, mysterious, own
 These yawning, blind, inhabitable caves.
 Yet went a fame in hell, that either here
 Are hid from view the inexhausted stores

Book
 V.

V. 50—79.

Prime of the burning soil and surging seas;
 Or else, (opinion oft discuss'd by fiends)
 That here perhaps are lodg'd those future plagues
 And tortures, such as not hell's fiercest spirits
 Unterrified conceive, more dire than all
 Themselves see, hear, or feel; and sole-reserv'd
 By doom eternal, till that last great day,
 When the created universe must end
 In ruins, but this world of woe remain,
 Where then for ever must be doom'd to dwell
 Another race of beings, like themselves,
 A race of men. Then doubtless must be loos'd
 The terrors of these gulfs, to prey on them,
 And work worse misery than ev'n fiends endure.
 Nor without justice: men must sure be deem'd
 Condign of heavier punishment than they:
 Since first by God in his own image form'd
 Of his spontaneous goodness: and when fall'n
 Thro' Satan's arts, then by a God redeem'd
 To second bliss. So double then appears
 The debt of love and gratitude they owe,
 More than the rebel angels, who from God
 Receiv'd their blest creation, but when fall'n
 No love to second happiness restor'd:
 Double with justice then man's punishment,
 On such as with more black ingratitude
 Forget their state, and spurn, and mock God's laws.
 Thus reason of these gulfs hell's native spirits.

Book

V.

V. 80—108.

Now Satan o'er the verge indignant borne

Of those abysses dire, and forcing on
 His viewless passage with intrepid wings,
 All-sudden falls, nor unalarm'd perceives
 His palsied form dragg'd headlong swiftly down
 By some invisible, resistless pow'r,
 Perhaps the Spirit of these loathed shades,
 Awaiting here his prey. Striving in vain
 Upward to mount, then first Satan knew fear.
 He shouted, deeming that his piercing cry
 Might call some vent'rous spirit who above
 Near might be flying, instant to descend
 With needful aid. But none appear'd. His shouts
 Serve but on ev'ry side from thousand caves
 Unseen, to swell dire echoes of his voice
 Bellowing around, convolving all their roars
 In fearful mockery of his deep distress.
 Thus urg'd along, unconscious now which way,
 Or fall'n how deep, arous'd by strong despair,
 In one last mighty effort he collects
 What of his own enormous pow'r remains.
 Sudden by force invincible, he checks
 His light'ning course, with difficulty freed
 From that fell grasp, till struggling fierce, at last
 Balanc'd on slowly-wafting wings, he turns
 His huge Typhœan bulk. Upward he flies,
 Outstretching wide his pois'd inquiring arms
 That sought some guide thro' total night, and felt
 Those hollow-sounding depths, whose dark expanse
 Re-echoes dismal, till thro' many a maze
 Retracing long his weary way, at last

Book
 V.

V. 109—138.

He gains the clouded mouth, and scarce with joy
Escapes, all-wond'ring, terrified, asham'd.

Book
V.

V. 139—167.

Returning now converse tow'rd inner hell,
Stretching past sight drear wildernesses, dark,
Assail his view, coasting those fiery seas,
Peopled with savage beasts of hideous bulk
And thousand ghastly shapes, all roaming fell,
All evil, suited to the horrid ends
Of wicked spirits, ministers of ill.
Monsters malignant, whose perverse delight
Is still to terrify the fiends they serve,
And with more hated ruin to confound
Hell's native gloom and misery. Employ'd
They seem, and on some deathful scheme intent
As if in secret, and prepar'd outstretch
In congregated bands their grizly forms,
O'ershadowing such a space, that thence no eye
Plain may discern their shadowy size, and tear
Furious the quiv'ring soil, in masses huge
Shatter'd around, while thousand hideous yells
Join differing sounds in one astounding roar.
Nor from insatiate havoc had they ceas'd,
Save that sagacious of some spirit nigh,
Hov'ring aloft amid the pregnant clouds,
Subtle they knew th' infernal King, when strait
All for a moment resting quick-uprear,
Surpriz'd, their frightful heads, that shew'd their eyes
Sullenly glaring, like vast balls of fire
Or as innumerable comets from afar

Red-blazing thro' the dark. With eager joy
 Or furious rage transported, instant all
 Rising in countless multitudes, aloft
 Soar thro' the air, their shrieks and flapping wings
 Deaf'ning all other sounds. Sudden they fall
 Amphibious, prone, amid the burning seas:
 There plunging deep, numberless fathoms down,
 As a dead mass at first, now turn'd they stop,
 And by sheer force from their abyss upheave
 Vast-surgings waves, lifted to height unwont
 By these fierce monsters. Strait collecting half
 The boundless lakes, before them they impel
 Masses of liquid flames, with all their store
 Of wond'rous habitants, and sever'd rocks,
 Immense leviathans, as islands huge,
 Behemoths, crocodiles, and sharks of hell:
 Hurried resistless onward, till their load
 Full from its bed outlifting, all the shores,
 Delug'd with fire, ingulf another sea.
 Effus'd by thousands o'er those fateful coasts,
 Deserted, to the view now forth appear
 The hidden monsters of the flamy deep;
 Terrific, dire, such as those ruinous beasts
 And demons shrink to view. Motionless first
 These lie, as dead, stunn'd by th' enormous shock.—
 Not long repos'd, for lo! with gradual pow'r
 Most seem reviving: with slow crash some ope,
 Gasping, their gulfy jaws: some broad expand
 Their massive scales; sudden some spout aloft
 Torrents of fire and blood: till all to life

Book

V.

V. 168—197.

Restor'd, the boundless shore shews one dread scene
 Of mix'd commotion: here in sullen rage
 Incumbent hills with such tumultuous weight
 Pealing the ground, that all the loosen'd coasts
 Tremble: here formless shapes on finny feet
 Stalk on with hurried pace: slow some away
 Cumbrously trail along their spiral length
 Voluminous, while 'mid the dusky air
 Some waft on scaly wings their confus'd way.
 All uttering deep tremendous-mingling roars,
 Which in their louder clamour drown the yells
 Of the fierce beasts, rioting high above,
 Exulting in their havoc and uproar
 Accurst, abominable.

Book
 V.

V, 198—227.

Satan saw
 Th' intolerable ruin, and aghast
 In conscious agony and mute despair
 Reflecting on heav'n's glories lost, and these
 Horrible furies his eternal lot,
 Shudd'ring, much wonders that as yet his eye
 None of heav'n's fallen spirits in his flight
 Had mark'd; but they aware of dangers dread
 Impending, by this ominous tumult warn'd
 Of the fell beasts, (wont presage, that foretold
 Infernal tempests nigh,) in trooping crowds
 Previous had fled, seeking in rocky caves
 Refuge from perilous destruction, known
 Approaching. Nor in vain their cautious fears.
 For lo! none other monitory sign
 Portentous giv'n, th' infuriate vengeance 'gins.

Such the fell nature of that treacherous ground,
 Raging thro' all its depths, and hence such war
 Of elements had been conceiv'd below, that now
 Contain'd no longer, with tremendous roars,
 Infernal earthquakes, in explosion vast
 Burst into thousand boundless gulfs at once,
 Tearing all hell: whose yawning chasms receive
 Ranges of mountains falling, more in bulk,
 In number more, than Alps and Appennines
 Together heap'd. No sooner there inclos'd
 Than back by eddying whirlwinds instant hurl'd
 Thro' those re-open'd gulfs: and borne aloft
 Sailing along amid the lurid air
 In one dread range, o'ershadowing half hell's climes—
 Till plunging, on each other dash'd, in such
 Storm inconceivable, as ne'er must know
 God's good creation till that last great day
 When all the frame of nature shall dissolve,
 And blazing all heav'n's ruin'd worlds shall fall,
 Headlong they sink amid those fiery seas
 Lost in the dire abysses, or perhaps
 Ev'n to this moment falling. Then unspent
 The furious hurricanes, with sure dire plagues
 Loaded of dust and poison, as surpass
 The dread simooms, which on Arabian wilds
 Uptear whole sandy deserts, burying deep
 Camels, and caravans in endless train,
 Themselves then dart upon those swelling seas,
 And from low deeps the billowing flamy mass
 Lashing in spiral whirls, at distance due

Book

V.

V. 228—237.

Form thousand pyramids of liquid fire :
 The spouts of hell ; which stalking to the shores,
 Enormous burst at length, continuous dash'd
 Afar, and overwhelm immeasur'd space
 With foaming ruins. Nor less dire on land
 Confusion reigns : for soon the mingling rage
 Lets loose the thunder of these regions. Now
 Gathering from all those rounding climes, it rolls
 And swelling bellows thro' dark-vaulted caves
 And ruinous gulfs of earthquakes, this whole world
 Filling with such unknown, astounding roars
 That all the rage combin'd of storming hell
 Yields not such horror. Then for very fear
 Ev'n those fierce beasts, to whom the sole delight
 Is madd'ning desolation, into caves
 Disorder'd troop, but refuge find not there.
 Satan himself under a mighty rock
 Creeps, low'ring his proud flight, now deem'd unsafe
 Amid such dire commotion. While the storm
 To its own devastation left, unchecked,
 Augmented rages, and thro' endless realms
 Tumultuously careers : till flashing broad
 In pale continuous sheets, hell's light'nings shot
 Streaming with sulph'rous blaze, now destin'd fire
 The hot volcanic matter, glowing round.
 Instant throughout all hell, horrific burst
 Thousand volcanos, rivalling in noise
 Th' infernal thunders, to whose rage compar'd
 Vesuvius, Ætna, Hecla, have no name.
 For lo ! unnumber'd craters, blazing dark,

Book
 V.

V. 258—287

Circling-immeasur'd, furious spout aloft
 Seas of fus'd metals, raining ashes, smoke,
 And rocks of solid fire; which rolling vast
 Upward against the topmost cope of hell
 Dash, struck; and higher would ascend, if space
 Higher were given. In that moment view'd,
 If eye durst look, those dreadful masses seem'd
 Ten thousand blazing columns, propping hell;
 Reaching from her unfathom'd depths, a space
 Thrice higher than the vaulted roof of heav'n.
 Disparting soon, repell'd, on either side,
 In double cataracts, downward they roll;
 Cataracts, to whose noise, or pow'r, compar'd
 A thousand Niagáras were a rill:
 Enlarging still in breadth, as prone they fall,
 Tho' oft oppos'd by jutting rocks that hung
 Viewless in air, alike down dash'd, and soon
 Under vast heaps of fiery ruins hid:
 Huge-swelling, ceaseless, till at length they form
 Other more hideous mountains, crimson-red,
 Gradual-ascending to hell's murky top.
 Terror herself, who there incumbent lies,
 Herself then trembles, and convuls'd with fear,
 Shrinks upward; shaking from her iron wings,
 That sound from pole to pole, if pole there be,
 Her embryo light'nings, forky, livid, dark,
 Brooding beneath her shade, or ghastly forms,
 That or by thousands in the surging flames
 Fall headlong, suffocated, or along
 Waft thro' the livid air their scorpion trains.

BOOK
V.

V. 988—317

While from the burning hills and wavy seas
 Volumes of sable poison roll convolv'd
 O'er all that shadowy world, with such a veil
 Low-spreading ev'ry spot, that total hell
 Is lost in murkiest darkness, long to dure
 Ere all its hurricanes with mingling pow'r
 Can dissipate th' essential night, and slow
 Restore the wont pale glare. Earth, air, sea, fire,
 And nameless elements, raging convuls'd,
 Storm in such tumult, that th' infernal King
 Pond'ring in obscure silence their event,
 Deems that all hell, unable to endure
 Shocks of such mighty war, had gone to wrack,
 And, lost all poise, the tott'ring barriers burst
 Of chaos, and hell's world in ruins flown,
 Loose o'er the universe of light. But God
 Omnipotent, he knew, had erst forbade
 Havoc so dread, and uncreated space
 Infinite, and the void, unpeopled realms
 Of desolate chaos in firm bonds inclos'd
 From mad irruption o'er creation's worlds
 Of light and order.

Satan now in haste
 Deeming his eager ken had late observ'd
 By the dim radiance of the stormy blaze
 His high-uplifted throne, prepares for flight,
 And floating vast amid the pervious dark,
 Sensible night, o'er many a region past
 That own'd him Monarch, till at last he gains
 Th' imperial eminence, whose stately brow

Book
 V.

V. 318—347.

Displays, proud-rai's'd, his throned seat, inclos'd
 Under a canopy of flaming rocks
 Carv'd with magnific art, nor wanting pomp
 Of regal ornament, gems, gold, and shine
 Of glorious majesty, concent'ring rays
 Of seeming splendor, that the blush of morn
 Resemble cheerful, or the dewy light
 Of purple-beaming eve, tho' oft obscur'd
 By dim obtrusive clouds, that sullen roll
 Their black-involving shades. Here Satan soon
 Stood, terrible, prepar'd th' assembly high
 Of all his subject spirits to convoke,
 Lab'ring thro' endless regions to oppose
 And frustrate God's just will. Obscure he stood,
 And rear'd aloft, half-seen, his dreadful shape;
 Then from beside his sceptred seat took down
 Th' infernal trumpet, where it hung conceal'd
 Within an arching cave, which to his mouth
 Apply'd, throughout its spacious concave took
 His full-expanded blast, and forth outsent
 Noise, dire-astounding, roll'd-continuous, deep,
 Louder than all th' artillery discharg'd
 Conjoint of armed hosts, in battle join'd.
 Sound, that was giv'n to pierce beyond the bounds
 Of hell, assailing soon the conscious ken
 Of all his evil ministers, where'er
 Employ'd, thro' hell, chaos, or desolate space
 Yet unexplor'd, or 'mid creation's worlds:
 And swell'd by rage, on earth ev'n mortal men
 Terrified, seeming to their startled ears

Book
 V.

V. 348—377.

As far-off thunder. Hell deep-shook; and all
Her mingling tempests, in a moment, all,
Silent were aw'd.

Book
V.

V. 378—407.

Her subject spirits, dispers'd
Various, prepare alike their Sov'reign's call
T' await. Legions, the subtlest part, thro' hell
Deep-hid in caves, their gloomy works depose,
Where amid agonizing shrieks, and cries
Of torture, sobs, and long-drawn groans of death,
Still they construct dire plagues, thence to be sent
On earth, that make man's else delightful world
Like their own hell. Here murders have their birth,
Ingratitude, malignant hate, revenge,
Suspicious envy, dark hypocrisy,
Malice 'twixt former friends, old parents' tears
For children grown rebellious, burning lust,
Intoxicating draughts, pride, blasphemies,
Whose dreadful machination utters sounds
Of deepest woe. Some 'neath those fiery seas
Invent dire schemes of war and fields of blood
Where man shall slaughter man: and still delight
To aid the wrong, and hinder willing peace,
By insults still renew'd. Busied were all
In whatsoever place, disorders, crimes
And misery consequential to instruct.
Now furious, darkly-seen, stalking they come
From out their hollow dens and deep abodes,
Pois'd on broad sails innumerable. Swift they rush
Thro' hell's black, lonely passages: full soon
Follow'd by trooping shapes of equall'd bulk,

(Wond'rous to tell) from many a distant world
 At their great Sov'reign's voice, with light'ning speed
 Ev'n now return'd: all wafted far and wide
 Cutting their way thro' air, that nought is heard
 Thro' those vast regions, save the sullen sound
 Of waving pinions, like the gathering roar
 Of mighty floods, or as the thund'rous noise
 Of multitudinous chariots in array
 Hurried to battle by fierce-neighing steeds.
 All fast convene tow'rd that imperial hill,
 Wont place of council, where sublime it stood
 Center of hell, round whose magnific height,
 Thro' lofty-vaulted space the Demons sweep
 On hov'ring wings. Here the glad sight survey'd
 Columns of pallid lustre, art-dispos'd,
 Of broad stupendous frame, which proud upbore
 A gorgeous-circling dome, and pomp within
 As of monarchal grandeur, now perceiv'd,
 But late in darkness veil'd. The rush of wings
 Still bespoke that all hell's subject pow'rs
 Assembled held their place. Deep silence reign'd.
 High in the midst upon his sable throne
 Satan majestic sat. His lofty form
 None might discern, save when the sudden gleam
 Of some dark-flaming billow, surging vast,
 Thro' sinking clouds with momentary flash
 Half shew'd him terrible, and swift display'd
 A range immense of hideous crowded forms
 Silent awaiting round. The fearful sight
 Seem'd, (if with earthly scene it holds compare)

Book

V.

V. 468—497.

As when a trav'ler, on some lofty hill
 Benighted, when fierce winds foretel a storm
 And spreading light'nings in pale sheets of fire
 Flash broad with swiftly-transient blaze, while scarce
 The moon thro' moving clouds a frightened glance
 Darts wild, then sees the vast horizon round
 And vaulted heav'n, what time assembling dark
 The Spirits of the tempest haste to whelm
 Destruction far and wide, by sea, by land,
 On ships, and tow'rs, and all the works of man.

BOOK
 V.

V. 4988—525.

Now all was still as death, when hell's proud King
 Awful arose, involv'd in shades: he stood
 Tow'ring before their eyes, yet none his shape
 Perfect discern'd: his rising shook with fear
 The boldest spirits, while aloft they gaz'd
 Wond'ring: his right arm seem'd to wield afar
 A kingly sceptre; and at times reveal'd,
 The dubious sight imag'd his haughty brows
 Crown'd with a pond'rous mass of dusky gold
 Or diamonds, sullen-ray'd. At last from mid
 Th' uncertain darkness came a voice, whose roar,
 As of a tempest, shook hell's hollow depths.

“ Pow'rs deathless, progeny of heav'n, once slaves,
 Now mighty Gods, not to heav'n's King himself
 Owning obedience, but his dreaded foes, whose proud
 Glory is now to win august revenge
 On him, th' Omnipotent, whose tyrant reign
 Your noble spirits endur'd not, but preferr'd

Boundless dominion o'er all other worlds,
 (Heav'n's servile courts resign'd) and me have chos'n
 Your honour'd chief monarchal, you I call
 From universal worlds and space unknown
 Against his unrelenting hate to wield
 Contempt and malice equal. True, for us
 In this incarcerating den, heav'n's King,
 Glutting his iron vengeance, pain and death
 Unutterable broods, for tort'ring woes
 Ransacks invention, and astonish'd hell
 Vexes with tempests, that the barriers shake
 Of chaos. But in vain the Tyrant hopes
 Us with these terrors to alarm. Behoves
 His pow'rfullest Omnipotence to send
 Horrors unspeakable, tremendous storms,
 Hurricanes, darkness, thunders, earthquakes, fires,
 If here he deems to hold us, or defend
 Hell's boundaries, else by us with instant pow'r
 Torn into atoms, thro' th' incumbent mass
 Confounded all of chaos, and o'erwhelm'd
 In mightiest ruins irresistible
 Upon creation's worlds; so to destroy
 All his fair universe. But tho' restrain'd
 Within this hideous cavern, our revenge
 Can ponder machinations, and construct
 Achievements, whose sole fame shall fill all heav'n
 With fearful horror, and ourselves exalt
 As equal to th' Almighty, nor permit
 Those angel slaves, amid celestial realms,
 Pleasures ineffable and bliss supreme

Book
 V.

V. 526—555.

Eternal to enjoy, while we immur'd
 In this dark world of death are doom'd to share
 Unending misery. Then (with bitter pangs
 Of deep remorse to torture us the more)
 We must behold our own lost place supplied
 With earthly men, uplifted into heav'n,
 Tho' losing too their pledge and claim of bliss,
 Yet thro' mysterious love divine and death
 Of an atoning Christ, a God made Man,
 Redeem'd to second favour, and if train'd
 In habits good during a transient life
 Probationary on their native earth,
 Then after tranquil death (their primal doom)
 Translated into better life, to heav'n,
 To bliss eternal, then themselves become
 Angels, and glorious spirits, who shall know
 And utterly deride us here inclos'd
 From light and bliss. Oh! agonizing thoughts!—
 But whither am I led?—All this remains,
 Possible only, not perform'd. Our part
 Grand, formidable, vast (as proof shall soon
 Testify) yet remains. By subtlest arts
 And tempting guise, still-watchful, to seduce
 Men from known duty, difficult and hard
 Constant to be preserv'd: and, when entic'd,
 Thro' gentle obvious pleas to hold in guilt,
 Till harden'd, blind, they mock instruction, lost
 In habits evil and perverse. So we
 Shall by supplanting piety to God,
 Love to mankind, due rev'ence of themselves,

Book
 V.

V. 556—585.

Their tri-une duty, fit the race of men
 To fill hell's boundless empires, and to share
 With us these stormy horrors, not for us
 Form'd only, but another people, fall'n,
 Ev'l as ourselves. But this magnific end
 Demands our ardent labours. Now thro' earth
 O'er many a region of the human world,
 Christ's meek and peaceful doctrines, heav'n-reveal'd,
 (Our curst grand enemy) calm-beaming, spread,
 And soon in one high-favor'd isle shall gain
 Reception universal, if our arts
 Prevent not, and subvert the busy aid
 Of angel-pow'rs, and th' unexampled toils
 Of a proud Monarch, lab'ring there to found
 A kingdom where religion, knowledge, peace
 Shall reign, while time itself shall dure. Nor mean
 The danger. From the pow'r and rising state
 Of this concerted empire and the wide
 Influence of its observ'd example, soon
 Thro' many a clime, now veil'd in barb'rous night,
 The full contagion would intrude uncheck'd,
 Of light and truth. Then should we see no more
 Fierce Pagan superstitions which inspire
 Men with insatiate thirst for war and blood,
 Murders of innocence, Christ's temples raz'd,
 Mad ignorance, devote idolatry,
 Infuriate havoc, spareless rapine, crimes,
 Ruin, and fiery death: men then become
 Proselytes to the rays of heav'nly joy,
 Order, and peace, and love. Hence, hateful scene!

Book
 V.

V. 586—615.

By us forbidden! We instead concert
 Wars endless, desolations uncontroll'd,
 Whose fury irresistible shall overwhelm
 Perdition on all efforts to oppose
 Our aims, by angels utter'd, or by men.
 True, late on earth, our baser schemes, construct
 With no considerate zeal, were haply foil'd
 By angel-arts. But now from earth I come
 My fiercest legions to collect, and thus
 At large propound our views, that all hell's spirits,
 Consulting thus assembled, may devise
 Plans of dark, hellish import, whose deep craft
 And subtlety, surpassing angel-thoughts,
 May, borne from hence to earth, all-sudden burst
 On our astonish'd foes, and speediest win
 Our utmost wish. Speak therefore, who combines
 Vengeance and malice, potent to contrive
 Schemes of eternal hate 'gainst nature's God,
 And angel-slaves, and men, who strive with them
 T' assimilate, unless our art obstruct
 Their three-fold machinations, and achieve
 Dominion uncontroll'd o'er all the earth."

Book
 V.

V. 616—643.

He ceas'd, and Silence like the dead of night
 Paus'd awful, in deliberation deep
 Holding the vast assemblage, till at last
 Some dread-responding voice, unknown amid
 Darkness, yet whose authoritative tone
 Argued some mighty state, aloud return'd.

" Monarch of héll, of that exalted name
 Sole worthy, since to thee not sole 'tis giv'n
 Us highly to surpass in might and pow'r
 But more in deep and subtlest wisdom, thou
 Th' Archangel, highest, wisest, erst in heav'n;
 Scarce second ev'n to God, ere noblest sense
 Of just ambition prompted thee to reign,
 Why should'st thou seek of us to frame new wiles
 Of wisdom equal to so grand a cause?
 Should all these myriads diff'ring counsel urge
 Successive, each improving each, yet soon
 Thy single thought in subtlety of art
 And ponder'd guile would all their schemes excel
 And their united wisdom far outshine.
 Speak thou then, solely potent to advise
 Wiles of more deep imagination, fit
 To hinder and o'er-whelm angelic pow'r,
 And our imperial aims, uncheck'd, insure."

Book
 V.

V. 644—672.

The voice was silent. From th' assembly rose
 A gen'ral murmur of applause, that roll'd
 As roars some furious torrent thro' the glades
 Of an o'ershadow'd vale, where Solitude
 Starts as she hears th' impetuous horror rage
 Among her hollow dells and arching rocks.
 The Prince of darkness with the flattering sound
 In secret pleas'd, stood like a pyramid
 Uprais'd aloft 'mid Egypt's scorching plains,
 Within whose mighty bulk successive Kings
 Slumber for ages in unfading death.

Till Silence anxious waiting, Satan now
Proudly his forethought counsels thus reveal'd.

Book
V.

V. 673—701.

“ Since me then worthy sole (honour which I
Disclaim amid assembled Gods) your voice
Deems to concert imaginations new,
Subtler and fiercer for our want, and big
With fury rising to augmented cause,
Listen my preconcerted thoughts, effect
Of meditation deep and brooded ire.
We see the Pagan Danes with restless thirst
Smitten of blood and death, thro' wild belief,
Most solemn and devout, of fancied Gods,
Delighting, as they deem, in slaught'rous war
Thought the sole school of heroes, fitted thence
For high translation from the field of death
To realms celestial, there to practise wars
And proud defend the Gods (honour denied
To cowards, or the ag'd, or who shall die
But by the vi'lent sword) during a space
Of intervening ages, till the day
Awful arrive, when nature's waiting foes
Assembled shall invade their heav'n, and end
In fiery ruins all creation's worlds.
Full of this dreadful faith, each meanest Dane,
Ignorant of Christ's milder doctrines, true
As heav'n from whence they sprung, glories to yield
His life in bloody battle, and to shun
The doom of cowards, endless misery.
If therefore we by guile and subtle arts

'Mid the deluded Danes this Pagan faith
 To fury can augment, that it shall taint
 Each thought and action with redoubled rage,
 Responsive to our purpose, till itself
 Our highest instrument become to whelm
 Destruction on our foes, and we can thus
 Eradicate the Christians, and the Dane
 Establish victor, who his martial faith
 And fierce idolatry, wars, blood, and crimes
 Shall found eternal, 'twere a proud emprise.
 List then: the means are easy. Let us choose
 Of subtlest, fiercest spirits known in hell
 A legion-band, who speeding to man's earth
 May hover o'er the Pagans. There at will
 Each, as occasion best beseeems, assume
 The visual shape and ensigns of the Gods,
 In whom they trust: who oft, they deem, descend
 From heav'n to join their battles, to direct
 The slaughter, and to mark the mighty deeds
 Of emulous heroes, till o'erwhelm'd in death,
 Celestial cars receive their souls in bliss.
 Let us in battles, like these fancied Gods,
 Visibly oft appear, or, as befits,
 In secret animate the Danes, and prompt
 Observe their proffer'd pray'rs, and oft by signs
 And omens of success augment and rouse
 Their credulous ardor.—With such transport then
 Of mad enthusiasm shall we fire their souls,
 When their own Gods they see assist their wars,
 And gratify their pray'rs, not dubious then,

Book

V.

V. 702—734.

But visible and plain, that like a storm
 Of Hell, resistless they shall instant overwhelm
 In final overthrow the Christian hosts,
 And all our mighty hopes total atchieve.
 These are my meditations. If by you
 Approv'd, be this your signal of applause,
 Deep silence. Shout not, lest the gen'ral roar
 Reach the quick senses of those angel slaves,
 In heav'n adoring, or thro' boundless space
 Roaming abroad to serve their master's ends.
 Our labours must be secret. No delay
 Shall intervene, ere we to earth depart,
 Accomplishing our purpose. Yet our arms
 Behoves us take, our deadliest arms. With these
 Hence let us bear to shroud us and protect
 Black clouds and fires of hell, and round us spread
 Whirlwinds and hollow thunders: the remains
 And refuse of those storms, which late we saw
 Raging throughout this world. So when on earth
 Mixing amid the battles, should heav'n's slaves,
 Descending from the Thunderer's abodes, essay
 To banish us, we may ourselves defend
 With equal pow'r:—or as occasion calls
 Oppose with hostile storm our angel foes;—
 Or with Earth's elements, at times, employ
 Our dark materials and sulphureous stores.
 Best fits it ever with a threatening front
 T' appear. If ye are silent, we prepare
 Instant to fix our novel enterprize."

Book
 V.

V. 732—760.

He ended now, and not a murmur breath'd
 Amid that vast assemblage. He forbade,
 Or those innumerable myriads had a shout
 Utter'd, which piercing hell's immeasur'd realms,
 Chaos, space infinite, and all the bounds
 Of nature's sphere, had ev'n the sons of God
 Startled in heav'n. This wily Satan hence
 Of wont experience, when th' astounding din
 Had drawn observance of applauded schemes,
 Which now he fear'd. Strait with imperial voice
 He gives command that all th' assembled spirits
 Back to their station wont, and known employ,
 Return with speedy wing, save those alone
 Whom his directive call summons by name.
 For well their Monarch knew what fiends renown'd
 Of his infernal orders, chief excell'd
 In subtle machination and fierce ire.
 Sudden throughout the gloomy throng'd expanse
 Uprise those winged furies, fanning broad
 With cautious-moving vans the murky air.
 While Satan, as they rise, a thousand names
 Thundering summons : which high-favor'd crew
 From 'mid the throng on eager-sounding wings
 Spring instant, and aloft exulting soar,
 Till form'd in waving balance calm they hang
 Around the tow'ring crest of hell's proud King.
 While the remaining universal mass
 Pass on, obeisant of command, and gaze
 Departing with retorted envious glare
 On the selected band, left with regret.

Book
 V.

V. 761—790.

Now the retiring hosts in countless throng
 Pass to their wont employ, a thousand ways.—
 The chosen spirits who impatient fly
 In air high-hovering, on expected sign
 Down drop innumerable, on resounding plumes
 Sweeping. Confer they now short space the plan
 Of their departure, which full soon dispos'd,
 Sudden with ready zeal at once they rise
 All in a body, and on broad wings urge,
 Heavy-commoving, their aerial way,
 Till in array that high monarchical seat
 Saw of their latest rear the dorsal wings
 Float away lessening. Soon their various course
 Parting, they haste to many a cave, where hid
 Lie their infernal arms, while far and wide
 Thro' dismal vales secret they ransack hell
 Of her dark, stormy terrors. Now with these
 Returning, as enjoin'd, they fast convene
 Amid a dreary wilderness, near which
 Glimmer'd a flamy sea, whose sulph'rous waves
 Darkling dispers'd at times a dubious gleam
 Around. The native beasts who o'er these wilds
 Roam'd, as they mark'd the dread assembly throng,
 Angry and sourly slow, in crowds retir'd.
 Satan, most fierce, as ever first in arms,
 Awaiting his full band, there stalk'd. His steps
 Echoed resounding as he strode along.
 As roars the midnight thunder thro' the dens
 Of some impervious vale. Th' uncertain stream
 Of paler light disclos'd his awful shield,

Stupendous, huge of bulk, the same dread frame
 Which erst in heav'n he had to battle borne
 Against God's faithful angels. Then it shone,
 Celestial shape too dazzling-bright to view,
 Like some illumin'd sun. But since his fall,
 Its splendor, shape had chang'd: for nought of heav'n
 Could pure as erst in this bad world remain
 Where all was evil. Black it seem'd and vast,
 Nor less than if upon his arm he bore
 A sever'd mountain, veiling his proud form
 That none might scan his height. His right-hand held
 A spear, sole like the meteor of the night
 Which from the pale horizon of the north,
 Portending storms, while nations gaze with awe,
 Shoots broad and swift, and scales the topmost heav'n.
 Round their dread monarch were at length arriv'd
 The whole select'd legion, seeming all
 As Satan arm'd, tho' less in height and shape,
 Till soon in quadrate vast of equal breadth,
 At distance due he ranges all his host
 For flight. Around them wide they roll thick clouds,
 Death-charg'd, immix'd with thunders, drawn from caves
 Smould'ring with hellish tempest, livid fires,
 Whirlwinds, and sulph'rous rains, and pois'nous smoke.—
 Th' imperial word is giv'n. Sudden on high
 Mount on expanded wings the total mass;
 And soon (the sable air obscuring more)
 Involv'd in moving darkness, waft along
 Their horizontal way, with faces prone
 Toward hell's surface, dimly seen below.

BOOK

V.

V. 821—850.

So Satan at their head conducts them on
 Aloft o'er many a clime, and dreary wild,
 O'er yawning gulfs, o'er precipices, seas,
 And endless shores. None other sounds were heard;
 Save of their flapping wings, which wearied now
 Encumber'd with their load, at last attain
 That side of hell, which long experience taught
 Lay next man's earthy globe, and where began
 Imperfect chaos its inclosing wall.

Book
 V.

V. 851—879.

Satan commands: at once in hovering poise
 Stop all the host. Suddenly down they fall
 Alighting. Instant thousand dreadful roars
 Conjoin their deep astound, proclaiming war
 Of elements. Behold a wonder! here
 Scarce thro' the mantle of thick night discern'd,
 Yawning before them lies, dark, hollow, vast,
 A vault of height immense that seems to pierce
 Far forward into chaos, hell's last bound.
 Wide seem'd its arch as is the bow of heav'n,
 When opposite the broad, portentous sun
 It strides o'er sable clouds from sky to sky.
 Now the tir'd legion in prompt order form'd,
 All to the entrance of th' enormous chasm
 Silent advance. When hark! a piercing shout
 That drown'd all other noise of chaos, rose
 As if from some dread beings hid within.
 The legion stops. Instant hell's furious King
 Singly darts forward, and some startled steps
 Entering the horrid den, loud call'd. The shout

Ceas'd, when a hollow voice that from above
Seem'd to descend, nor distant far within,
Scarce thro' the noise distinguish'd, thus return'd.

Book
V.

V. 880—906.

“ Hail, King! what mischief new recalls thy steps
Across this vault. Yet rest not thou secure,
Altho' the labour of a thousand years
(A labour worthy fiercest spirits of hell)
Could thro' the midst of this dread matter ope
A long and dismal way, nearest to earth,
That ev'n our utmost toil can still support
The horrid passage, if thou fail to send
Fresh aids of potent angels, to relieve
Our destin'd post, or mitigate at least
A task that single is too hard to dure.”

“ Peace, Satan cried, and calmly learn to bear
Thy destin'd lot. Ill fits it spirit of hell
Aught to complain. If any dare to quit
His fated task—he knows—Be bold and true.”

He said, and instant leads th' expectant hosts
Close to the cave; when lo! before them spread
A black and gulfy road, where dim appear'd,
For ever flitting, dark and fiery gleams
Far inward, further ev'n than keenest sight
Could penetrate, that oft faint-shew'd a vault,
Huge, hideous, such as yet no human eye
Beheld, and Fancy shudders to conceive.
Cautious, in order due, there entering march

Satan and all his pow'rs, in shielding clouds
 Enwapt, when lo! (astonishing to tell!)
 High overhead on vast-o'erspreading wings
 Upborne, with pain the sight might scarce discern
 Numberless demon-forms, who strong-conjoin'd,
 Up with exerted might heav'd by main force
 The rocking elements. The chaos loose
 Deciduous, vainly thousand columns rais'd
 Pond'rous aloft, of mighty bulk, assay'd
 Sole to support. Continuous from the base
 O'ercharg'd by strength unheard infernal spirits,
 Rang'd side by side unnumber'd, backward drove
 Th' indignant discord. So the banded pow'rs
 Satanic move along with eager steps
 Under a canopy of outstretch'd wings,
 While the high demons, as they mark below
 Their Monarch onward lead his lengthen'd host,
 Accost his legions with exerted voice.—
 They silent hasten on. Above are heard
 Crashings of falling rocks, that threat ev'n now
 To hide in shapeless ruins all his train
 And hell's proud King himself: supplanted soon
 By roars of rushing waters, echoing far
 Thro' the dark cavern. Next loud hissings rise,
 When instant horribly broad sheets of fire
 Pallid down-flash, that spite of murkiest shades
 Obscure illume afar the dreary path,
 And to the ghastly eye sudden disclose
 Th' horrific dungeon, stretching beyond sight,
 And plain above, lab'ring with gestures fierce

Book

V.

V. 907—936.

Th' alarmed angels, seeming with fatigue, Book
 Ready to fall o'erpower'd. The gleamy light, V.
 Endur'd not long; for soon apparent tracts W. 937-1956
 Of earth, revolving with impetuous noise,
 Onward resistless drove the fiery mass,
 Or whelming deep, extinguish'd all, that now
 The universal cave is sudden left
 In death-like darkness. Follow furious howls
 Of swelling winds, which all the rocking mass
 From end to end convulse in horrid war,
 Sounding thro' chaos in tremendous peals,
 That the high angels, fearful more than wont,
 Tho' bred to constant storms, now shout aloud.
 But Satan heard unmov'd, whose fix'd command
 Erst had ordain'd these fiends of mightier strength
 To prop th' incumbent weight, nor e'er would spare
 Spirits of subtler nature to their aid.
 Furious he strides along with hurried steps,
 His legion equal following, by those shouts
 Sole guided. He in vain forbade alarm.
 An universal terror shook them all,
 Usurping sense. Thus long th' innumerable host
 Doubting, despairing, pass, thro' many a maze
 Turning of that dire vault, by many deem'd
 Endless. Oft Satan with exhorting voice
 Hearten'd his pow'rs, lest else in panic fear
 Till as they journey on forlorn and wild,
 Passing a sudden labyrinth, lo! now
 Bursts on their startled gaze, at distance seen,
 The spacious mouth of that huge cave, that show'd

A collid sullen light of gloomy grey,
 Image of vacuous twilight, which first seen
 Bordering so sudden on the single dark
 Dazzled the view. Joyful advance they on.
 Nearer as swift they draw, th' enlarging mouth
 Opens in space, and clearer dawn illumines
 The doubtful way, till they at last have won
 Its utmost verge. All stood, and forward look
 Eager upon the nameless void, and space
 Infinite, not unpierc'd of dusky light
 Incipient, thro' immeasur'd depths, the wide
 Barrier which separated other worlds.

Book
 V.

V. 967—994.

Satan immediate on that awful brink
 Advanc'd, with voice directive thus instructs
 Th' observant hosts, and to his words adjoins
 Signals, and points indicative the hand.

" Arriv'd at last, our gladden'd sight beholds
 Creation's outer bounds, the confines broad
 Of dim-commencing light, whose interval
 Of empty dusk divides God's universe
 Created fair, from chaos and the realms
 Of desolate space, imperfect, increate,
 Circling unbounded, without end. This way,
 Far to the right, lie heaven's empyreal climes
 And realms of bliss, once dwelt by us. Direct
 Before us, past this twilight-glimmering space,
 Lies God's fair universe, with glorious orbs
 Fill'd, and vast worlds roll'd round by beamy suns,

Prolific, darting light and heat. Some wheel'd
 Themselves in planetary circles round
 Suns fix'd, with gradual motion gently drawn
 In soft harmonious order, calmly yield

Book
 V.

V. 995—1024

Concordant music to celestial sense
 Thro' ever-varying spheres. Behold! ev'n now
 Some mighty orb or world revolving near
 Creation's outer marge, appears in view
 Advancing hitherward, not full beheld,
 Yet dim-discern'd by yon vast shadows thrown,
 Moving afar along this ashy air,
 And darkening with deep gloom the cloudy space
 Of the surrounding atmosphere. Through which
 Dividual boundary, swift convey'd amid
 The radiant universe, past many a world
 Bright or opaque, rotative, or unmov'd,
 Hence we must steer our mindful course, at will
 Tortuous or straight, and in one mass conjunct
 Pass, fearful of detection, veil'd in clouds,
 Like some tempestuous gust by polar winds
 Driv'n thro' creation with resistless rage,
 Till we arrive at last the ocean wide,
 Spread o'er man's globous earth, whose softer space
 Shall in its yielding bosom, deep-empier'd,
 Receive us safest, and may mitigate
 With gentlest pressure our infuriate fall.
 There at our leisure we may best compose
 What dissarray may foil our wearied strength
 Worn with our perilous voyage, and may haste
 To execute those counsels, which our thoughts

Alas, have now concerted in mid hell. **Book**
V.

V. 1025—1053

He spoke; and instantly the willing host
 Impatient bids prepare: they as contriv'd,
 (Each singly round himself) collective roll
 Thunders, and pitchy clouds, and smoky fires.
 Then crowded in close mass, all quick become
 Invisible to sight, as if to air
 Melted away, and opposite man's earth
 As use had taught, forward expert they point
 Their culminating van: as when a ship
 The sole Manilla charg'd with all the wealth
 Of Eastern Ind tow'rd Acapulco turns
 From throng'd Phillippine Isles and China's coasts
 Her long and trackless voyage, purposing
 Over the vast Pacific, cross'd in space
 Waters engirding half this terrene globe;
 To draw her treasur'd stores and safe unfold
 In other waiting worlds her thousand gems
 Rubies and sapphires, opal and the shine
 Of emeralds, Persia's silks and gold, and spoil
 Of wasted kingdoms and imperial thrones.
 All waiting for their dreadless course, at once
 Give their fierce whirlwinds way, which instant drive
 Forward, ungovern'd, in a moment, blown
 Swifter than light'ning, all th' embody'd mass
 Thro' space unmeasurable, past the worlds
 Of universal nature, and the realms
 Of wide creation. Conscious tumult told
 Of some disorder'd fury, fled along,

In its own wild, unfathom'd darkness hid
 Millions of leagues, ere yet th' infernal host
 On their mysterious transit driv'n, had pass'd
 With speed so unconceiv'd, that even now
 Hurl'd headlong 'mid the ocean of earth's globe
 Dashing they fall. Instant high-surfing waves,
 Arch'd from the lowmost depths, within their wombs
 Raging receive them. Buried all awhile
 Remain, o'erpower'd with hard fatigue, and lie
 Strown on the mighty waters' channel'd base:
 All safe alike, for sudden now they rise
 Wrapt in their clouds, and seizing to themselves
 The loosen'd hurricanes, behold! the sea
 Drops down, appeas'd. Their forms they now assume
 Rejoicing in their safety and their flight
 Deem'd unobserv'd, under the conduct high
 Of their proud King, whom now his legion hails
 Congratulant, as o'er the lowmost beds
 Of the unsounded sea they walk erect,
 And gaze, above, around, the pathless mass
 Of azure waters, where so low, all seem'd
 Silent and peaceful-mild, nor the broke roar
 Of falling wave could reach the tranced ear.
 As the high billows settled to a calm,
 Magnificent appear'd the solemn scene,
 As when at silent evening hour of peace
 The pensive eye of Meditation marks
 With reverential awe the dome of heav'n
 Deck'd o'er its blue serene with thousand fires,
 Emptying their golden lamps of dewy light,

Book

V.

V. 1054—1063

Streaming-unbounded, while the white clouds float
In lucid beauty thro' th' expansive sky.

'Twas now man's night, and on the surface green
The full-orb'd moon oblique her quivering beams
Shot bright, each spangled wave robing in gold,
Where stars innumerable trembling shone
Reflected. O'er the wide translucent deep
Ships glitt'ring far, as on the crystal top
They wing'd with bended sails their shadowy way,
Mov'd, swan-like, to th' observant ken of Spirits,
Who on the watch at so unwonted scene
Felt an extatic glow of strange delight.
Anxious they gaze, if mid the vasty waves
Land within sight appear. Yet none they view.

Book
V.

V. 1004—1112

So on they pass thro' many an arching cave
Of chrystal pure, or sparry rock, and groves
Of orient pearl, and coral grotts, o'erhung
With thousand varied shells, glitt'ring of hues
Changeful in beam, and strown with natural grace
Unwitness'd: while around wild arbours crept
Beauteous sea-shrubs, and flow'rs of forms and dyes
Fresher and fairer than the costly gems
Earth's gardens yield. Wide o'er the radiant floor
By thousands lay unheeded jewels rich
That thro' cerulean waters shot their rays
Of colour'd light. Around, delighted trains
Of gliding fishes, streak'd with every tint
Heav'n's arch displays, reflected to the moon
Playful, quick golden gleams, and wond'ring eyed

The stranger wand'ers. They intent rov'd on,
 Nor land discern'd, till some advent'rous Spirit
 Gradual-ascending, soon attain'd at will
 The surface of the sea, when lifting high
 Half of his bulk, he stationary gaz'd
 Eager around, and wide; far as the ken
 Of his keen-piercing eye explor'd. Ere long
 Joyful he deem'd the moon's wan glimmering rays
 Discover'd, distant far, white-glittering cliffs.
 Instant descending, he disperses round
 The welcome tidings, which proud Satan heard
 Delighted, for he knew those shining cliffs
 Spoke Albion's isle. That way they turn in haste,
 Exulting: and along the sea's low beach
 Half-flying, treading half, full soon they mark
 Upswelling from the bottom, chalky rocks.
 Tow'rd these they glad approach, and pleas'd behold
 Wave-worn, supported, hollow-arching caves,
 Rang'd various underneath on columns high.
 Entering within whose shades, they here dispose
 Vast stores of arms, incorruptible now
 Of moist or dry, and cumulate involv'd
 Huge pitchy clouds, which as a cloke they bare,
 Thund'rs, and fires, and smoke, and embryo storms,
 Tumultuous urg'd along, there safe to lie
 Unseen, unknown, till prompt occasion call:
 Then backward turning their enliven'd steps
 Close to the wall of those deep-piled rocks,
 At signal due, all in array ascend,
 A shadowy legion fierce, until arriv'd

Book

V.

V. 1113—1148

The ocean-surface and to open view
 Of beamy light, invisible to eye
 All instant turn, their grosser forms withdrawn,
 And firm corporeal to ætherial chang'd.

BOOK
 V.

V. 1163—1178

So thro' th' aërial void they urge their way
 Impetuous, unperceiv'd, till their vast train
 Approach in silent shade the murm'ring vales
 And tented plains of Exham. Far above
 Conceal'd in rolling mists that from the waves
 Rose of deep-flowing Ex, their glance discerns
 Th' infernal pow'rs on some obscure consult
 Assembled. Now their mighty pristine shapes
 Assum'd, the host Satanic under guide
 Of their proud Emperor in warlike parade
 Tow'rd their compeers advanc'd. Dire was the noise
 And tumult of fierce joy, that from each host
 Burst at the sight of other: chief from those
 By Satan left, now to behold their King
 Return'd with multitudinous array
 Of pow'rful legions destin'd to become
 Their glad associates in dark deeds of guile
 And future war. High gratulation loud
 Salutes with solemn hail th' Infernal Chief,
 To whose exact enquiry prompt reply
 Tells that th' opposing human armies rest
 Yet separate, as when he parted late
 On his proud enterprize: both under guard
 Vigilant of empyreal pow'rs, alike
 Adverse. When eager thus the Prince of Hell.

" Now therefore is our time, while we to earth
 Return'd with great and wisest pow'rs remain
 Yet undiscover'd, thro' th' exulting Danes
 Fury ungovernable and desire
 Frantic for battle to inspire, till all
 The host triumphant, issuing from the camp,
 Spread havoc and destruction far around
 O'er populous plains and towns with sword and fire
 In numbers irresistible. Perhaps
 Thus they may tempt the English pow'rs to meet
 In adverse battle, ere as yet the chiefs
 Return with banded aids, so sure to yield
 Victory uncontroll'd, while we aloft
 Visible like the Pagan Gods, attend
 Our vot'ries' deeds and prompt assist their pray'rs,
 Exciting confidence and fiery zeal
 As yet unknown in frenzy as effect."

Book

V.

V. 1173—1201

His spirits applaud : and thro' the waning night
 Satan to all his host untir'd imparts
 Secret instruction, big with fraud and death,
 Till ere the unmask'd dawn thro' earliest dews
 Serenely cadent over hill and vale
 Had pour'd her coral light, th' ætherial pow'rs
 Malevolent amid the Danish camp
 Had scatter'd wildly-baneful thoughts, and sleep
 Disturb'd with dreams of blood. Now the thron'd sun
 Sprung from the sea in panoply of gold
 Ascended heav'n, diffusing gem-bright beams.
 The wicked throng of Spirits, scatter'd round

VOL. I.

G g

The Danish camp in silent due array
 Await the rising of the Pagan host
 To their wont matin orisons. Full soon
 Forth issue from the tents innumerable throngs,
 Warriors in brilliant arms, and haughty chiefs
 Magnific-deck'd, standards, and sacred bards,
 Under their well-known orders marshall'd soon,
 And snow-white prophetesses, matron dames
 And youths and graceful virgins, met as us'd
 In vast assemblage their due rites to pay
 Of solemn adoration to Heav'n's King.

BOOK
 V.

V. 1202—1230

Bards sweet-attune their holy melodies.
 Harps mingling swell responsive strains. The hosts
 Fervent, extatic join, and raise devout
 The universal hand and ardent eye
 Tow'rd heav'n, adoring.

When behold!—amid
 Th' irradiate sky, by swift degrees display'd,
 Glory and light as of a thousand suns
 Burst thro' the blue meridian vault, and soon
 Aloft, in sight of all, thro' brilliant clouds
 On each hand parting from the splendid frame,
 Descended smooth a mighty chariot, roll'd
 Magnific as of gold or living fire.
 Its gorgeous wheels, flashing purpureal rays,
 Uprais'd on high a concave blazing dome,
 Within whose vast recess, sublime-enthron'd
 Sat a majestic shape, conspicuous; cloth'd
 As in empyreal armour, and his brows

Girt with a tow'ring crown, celestial-bright.
 Awful he sat, nor seem'd in pow'r and state
 Less than a God, as with almighty arm
 He rein'd the furious Tygers, whose huge forms
 Floating terrific thro' the radiant air
 Drew his resplendent pomp. Beside him hung
 His dazzling shield stupendous, and in range
 Of trophied grandeur countless lances shone,
 While his right-arm upheld a flamy spear
 High-eminent, which as a signal beam'd
 To thousand shapes of lineament divine
 Who in refulgent train attendant mov'd
 After th' imperial car. Most goddess-like,
 All arm'd, and mounted chief on winged steeds;
 Some in pedestrian grace sailing along
 Th' illumin'd heav'n.

The Pagan hosts,—aghast,—
 In admiration rapt,—astonish'd,—know
 Th' Almighty King of Gods, deign'd to descend
 Ev'n from Valhalla's glorious domes with these
 His Goddess train of Valkyries,—Strait all
 Exulting with a cry of mix'd acclaim
 Shout universal, "Odin, Odin, come
 With heav'nly apparition from his halls
 Of joy." In prostrate awe all fall devout
 Prone to the earth.

Lower the glorious car
 Descends, and as it moves, a floating shade
 Spreads o'er the dazzled earth, of verd'rous land
 Covering a furlong space, until it hung

BOOK ;
 V.

V. 1931—1960.

Book
V.

V. 1261—1290

Curb'd by degrees in stationary poise
Above the kneeling host. Th' adoring bards
Scarce dare gaze upward in amaze, and strike
Symphonious harps, and sing in holy strain
Hymns of glad praise. Th' Almighty throned shape,
Supreme-uprising from his orient seat,
Forth stretches vast his glitt'ring spear, and waves
Its massy frame, beck'ning to all the host
As if with invitation to ascend;
Then, sternly fixing his tempestuous brows,
Points with infuriate gesture and fierce rage
Where lie contiguous cities, or wide towns,
Peopled with native habitants: and strikes
With unconceived blow the flamy range
Of his commingling lances, that all heav'n
Resounds with sudden noise, to dire astound
Swell'd, as his rais'd, ungovernable arm
Rings on his adamantine shield the din
Of deepest battle.

Mute astonishment

Seiz'd all th' imploring army, and behold!
The mighty Raven, where it stood aloft
Conspicuous floating 'mid the silky folds
Of the fate-hallow'd standard, sudden rear'd
His sable wings on high, instinct with life
And joy, triumphant; presage of success,
And glorious victory.

Now a vapourous cloud

O'er the mid heav'n rolling its darken'd train,
From the reluctant eyes in raptur'd awe

Fix'd fervent, gradual-veil'd the splendid pomp,
 Soft-*evanescent*, till at length the sky
 Fades to its wont blue aspect. Scarce had thus
 Parted the radiant vision, ere the Danes
 Enthusiastic fury seiz'd. They start
 Sudden, and madd'ning strike their sonant shields
 With quiv'ring spears. Fierce acclamation loud
 Ascends to heav'n, in long-commingling cries
 Of "Slaughter, slaughter, battle, instant war.
 "Odin invites us—Heav'n's Almighty King,
 "Visible now to each astonish'd eye,
 "Gives signal plain of battle. Let us hence
 "Instantly to assail unravag'd towns,
 "Temples, and provinces with sword and fire,
 "Or ev'n the English camp, whither the God
 "Pointed. Oh! never, never will we bear
 "Ignoble peace.—We and our sons unborn
 "Will with blood-reeking arms thro' many an age
 "Exterminate the Christians, and ascend
 "From fields of gore to heav'n's all-splendid halls.
 "Odin will share with us feasts, sports, and wars."

Book
 V.

V. 1291—1319

Wildly they leap for joy; such ardor breath'd
 The desp'rate host, and thro' th' enraged ranks
 Such uncontroll'd impatience fir'd their souls.
 Some deem, that in a body all the host
 Should storm with pow'r conjunct the English camp
 Instant, of ample devastation thus
 And final victory sure. This counsel aids
 Fierce Oskital. But Guthrun, Sov'reign King,

Dissuades, and to the public mind recalls
 The former high resolve t' await reserv'd
 Fresh fields of honourable fame, where Death
 Shall claim from paths of noblest danger souls
 Of mightiest warriors. Rather he approves
 That all in bands diverse forth-issuing pour
 O'er the surrounding country, and enjoy
 Battles on ev'ry hand, where'er the foe
 Embodied may oppose (for so, he deems,
 Appear'd the God's high will) and conquer towns
 And plains as yet unvisited, until
 Advancing in full pow'r the English host
 Return to glorious fields of hard contest.

Book

V.

V. 1321—1349

Obeisant to his words, ere yet the sun
 Rode in his noon, innumerable squadrons fierce
 Rush o'er contiguous plains. Before them strode
 Ruin with giant-step, as o'er the land
 They bear mad desolation, havoc, spoil,
 Insatiable, and with impious fires
 Sack each devoted temple's holy rest,
 Or rising villages, or peopled towns,
 Drenching with slaughter their blood-purpled swords.
 Borne o'er the various provinces, they pour
 Resistless, till th' alarmed country, lost
 In fearful expectation, shudd'ring moans
 Inevitable doom of final death.
 So on they roam, till all the land presents
 One dire tumultuous scene, confusion link'd
 With massacre, and near the confines come,

Insolent, of the shatter'd English camp.
 There madd'ning they aspire by fiercest acts
 Of wanton devastation to allure.
 Alfred with all his rous'd, indignant pow'rs
 Battles yet premature to tempt and waste
 His scarce-recover'd strength; where wide-entrench'd
 Pond'ring designs of import vast, he lay
 Awaiting when his chiefs with summon'd aids
 Should to his camp return, and full employ'd
 That interval of time with busiest works.

Book
 V.

V. 1850—1876

These provocations and insulting arts,
 And universal havoc raging round,
 Th' angelic pow'rs observ'd, nor idle view'd,
 Or void of meet surprise. Alarm'd, their thoughts,
 Endued with spiritual penetration, strait
 Suspect Satanic subtleties and wiles,
 Effecting operations pow'rful more
 Than wont: and instant image Hell's proud King
 Now lab'ring furiously to execute
 His horrid threats, late-utter'd. On the watch
 Alert, invisible to sight, dispers'd
 Various around, they mark infernal crafts,
 Perform'd mysterious. In amaze they see
 To fervent pray'rs of the deluded Danes
 Imploring heav'nly armour, thro' the air
 Amid deep thunders or pale fires, huge shields
 Or blood-stain'd swords down-hurl'd by awful shapes
 Illusive, habited as mightiest Gods,
 Or Demigods, innumerable:—Or in shades

Of hideous darkness by the yawning mouths
 Of solitary dens, untrod by men,
 Sounds utter words oracular, of import
 Terrific, big with prophecy and deeds
 Of hideous mention, to the greedy ears
 Secret-deliver'd of th' enquiring brave.—
 Or ghosts of long-departed chiefs arise
 From their oped graves in battle-fields at breath
 Of charmed Runic rhymes.—That soon the ken
 Intelligent of angel sense perceives
 Legions of spirits newly drawn from hell
 In league of subtlest machination join'd
 T' inspire with hellish fury, and delude
 The wretched Pagans to enthusiasm wild
 And solemn trust in these their fancied Gods.

BOOK
 V.

V. 1578—1406

Delib'rate, in himself collected, soon
 Michael, empyreal leader, deep-revolves
 The meditated mischief, and events
 Ponders, that consequential may induce
 Dangers inevitable near. Unsafe
 He deems the fate of empire to confide
 And threaten'd stablishment of Christ's all-pure
 And heav'nly faith thro' Britain's favor'd isle,
 (Perhaps from her example high, to win
 Secure foundation o'er the farthest realms
 Of this terraqueous globe) unsafe he deems
 So great, and weighty charge in guard to trust
 Of his own fewer pow'rs: before scarce meet
 Or equal 'gainst so fierce, infernal foes;

Now utterly unmatch'd. All vain he deems
 T' oppose their proud augmented force. Behold!
 Prescient of future, th' archangelic pow'r
 By dread, mysterious signal swift convokes
 His conscious hierarchies.—Round their chief
 Summon'd they throng, by orders and degrees
 Thron'd regular, with heav'nly glories crown'd;
 To whom, in gorgeous majesty array'd,
 Their godlike King.

Book
 VI.

V. 1407—1436

“ Astonish'd, we behold
 Satan with pow'rs innumerable arm'd
 Of subject spirits, new-conven'd, whose dark
 Malignant fury and consummate guile
 Aim now to execute those haughty boasts
 Menac'd by Hell's fierce King. Their horrid rage,
 Too eager, has surpass'd its own intent.
 We are aware;—by skill we have discern'd
 The dangers we have 'scap'd; else might have met
 Incautious. Now our numbers we confess
 Unequal to oppose in hostile range
 All hell, convok'd to war: or trust our charge
 Magnific, to our disproportion'd aid.
 Behoves us instant, new and meet allies
 To ask of angels from th' empyreal courts
 Of highest heav'n, whose union may support
 Our else o'erpow'red strength. Wherefore my firm
 Unalter'd purpose rests from these confines
 Of earth, with some selected train, to part
 Immediate to our native heav'n, and there
 Call mightiest aids of high, celestial thrones

To join our glorious work : prompt all to yield
 Assistance in the cause of God, his Christ,
 And injur'd man, by Demon-arts assail'd.
 Departing thus, the remnant of my pow'rs
 I leave in charge of this afflicted isle.
 Your constant care be her defensive host
 And her unequall'd King : on whom alone
 Depend Britannia's safety, peace, and weal
 Thro' many a future age. Her sons unborn
 To these must look for happiness ; shall call
 These men deliv'ers, fathers, guardian-shields.
 Wherefore attend my strict command. Prevent,
 By ev'ry care most vigilant, the march
 Of Alfred's host, imperfect yet, but soon
 To feel increase of multitudinous aids
 Summon'd from distant plains, till ye behold
 Me from the states of heav'n return'd sublime
 With mighty pow'rs of radiant demigods.
 Not sooner will the Danish host assail
 The Christian camp, but wait (so wills their chief
 Of nobler nature) the full-arm'd approach
 Of all the native legions, for array
 Of num'rous war in fair-contested fields
 Glorious and open. Only if ye yield
 Satan by wily insults all too soon
 Forth to elude the English host, and tempt
 Certain destruction in inferior fight,
 Will he effuse his dreadful-brooded ire,
 Effectively, and whelm our rising state
 In final ruin. Wherefore act, forewarn'd."

Book
 V.

V. 1437—1466

He spoke; and instant loud applause reveal'd
 Glad approbation. Strait the mighty Chief
 From mid the splendid throng selective calls
 A glorious band, who in imperial train
 Shall to celestial realms of bliss escort
 His airy voyage. They sublime ascend
 Attendant chariots in compact array
 Spontaneous moving, which on wings of gold
 Stretch'd o'er harmonious-rolling wheels advance
 Smooth thro' the beamy sky, and rapid waft
 Their skilful guides, beyond the cloudy sphere
 Of this terraqueous globe, beyond the space
 Of universal nature, passing stars
 Or suns innumerable, which to other worlds,
 Various as infinite, dispens'd their beams;
 Peopled, perhaps, with varying habitants
 By all-creative wisdom to each clime
 Accommodated; till the gorgeous pomp
 Arrive in state of solemn majesty
 The glittering borders of the heav'n of heav'ns.

Book
 V.

V. 1467—1486

ALFRED.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK VI.

The angels arriving in heaven pass first through the rural or more sequestered parts of it, then through the populous and more inhabited regions, whose delights and glories are pictured to the fancy. Michael comes into his own empire, where he is met by the orders of angels subject to his command. He ascends his throne, and explains the cause of his arrival, which is to lead back with him to earth a new band of select spirits to be employed against Satan in the defence of the Christians, but declares that it is first necessary to have the permission of the Deity. To intreat which, Michael and his powers approach the throne of the Supreme Deity, of which a faint developement is endeavoured to be conveyed to human imagination. The permission of the Deity is granted. Adoration and praise of the Supreme. Michael and a selected legion prepare to return to earth. They pass through various spheres of the created universe, till they at length enter that planetary system, within which man's earth moves. They see on their way the several other planets within this sphere, according to our ideas of astronomy. At length perceiving the earth with her attendant moon, they stop awhile on the hills of the satellite, where being struck with admiration at the extent and grandeur of their journey and the prospects they have seen, Michael breaks out into a rapture of astonishment at the Omnipotence and goodness of the Deity. They then descend to earth, and joining their other powers, enter the camp of the English.

ALFRED.

BOOK VI.

V. 1—18.

CELESTIAL pow'r, thou who canst give the soul,
Borne on Imagination's ardent wings,
Herself creating, to behold display'd
Visions of glory passing earthly thought,
Deign o'er thy vot'ry to effuse thy beams
Of purest light: guide my unused steps,
Approaching with a meek religious awe;
Protect mine eyes from sight, my tongue from speech,
Of aught profane for human utterance,
While I presume th' empyreal realms of bliss
To pierce, and ope the secrets of high heav'n.

Now had the glorious embassy, beyond
The farthest verge of this round universe,
Arriv'd the lucent wall, whose opal tow'rs,
Beaming as suns, with dazzling radiance bound
Heav'n's everlasting regions. Whence in full
Stupendous prospect lay th' unclouded view
Of all creation, with innum'rous worlds

Fill'd, that in ever-intervolving spheres
 Mov'd various, and proclaim'd the pow'r divine
 Which gave them being and their place ordain'd.
 On these so lately past, th' angelic train,
 Checking their swifter voyage, gaze awhile
 With looks of grateful joy and mix'd amaze,
 Ere thro' the loftily refulgent gates
 That tow'rd the Eastern courts celestial led,
 Their bright procession rode.

BOOK
 VI.

V. 19—48.

Ent'ring they view

The mansions of the blest: the chosen seats
 Of mighty Hierarchies, orders bright,
 Angels, Archangels, Cherubs, Seraphim,
 Thousands of thousand heav'nly hosts, dispers'd
 Thro' radiant climes of infinite extent,
 Illum'd with glory and transcendent shine
 Of vision beatific, that dispens'd
 To highest sense of angels perfect joy,
 All light, all purity, all happiness.
 Here met in lavishest profusion each
 Entrancing bliss, (yet far more excellent)
 Which in Arcadian or Elysian fields
 Poetic harps have feign'd. No eye hath seen,
 No ear hath heard, nor human heart conceiv'd
 The rapt'rous joys in never-failing spring
 Abundant here. Calm now the fervid orbs
 Of the refulgent chariots in array
 Melodious roll along heav'n's crystal floor
 Which as a sea of gems or liquid gold,
 Mingling with changeful splendour, soft, serene,
 Shone from afar, where the delighted eye

Repos'd not long, but gently wander'd o'er
 Allur'd to boundless distance, or reclin'd
 On many a gradual swell and winding fall.

Book
 VI.

V. 49—77.

Thus as the train magnific on its way
 Approaching tow'rd the throne of Deity
 Conspicuous mov'd, its pomp accompanied
 Full many a band celestial; shapes divine,
 Of beauty inexpressible, adorn'd
 In robes of glorious texture, and their brows
 Circled with crowns of gold. On orient wings
 Glittering with richest hues, serene they sail
 Along the air, as varying fancy leads;
 Sometimes precursive on the clear expanse
 Of the crystalline pavement, they proclaim
 The coming state. Sometimes with playful flight
 The splendid equipage ascends on high,
 Whence lay in prospect all th' extended scene
 Below; the regions of empyreal heav'n,
 Of rural view or populous.

Around

Nearest they mark a champain-tract diffus'd,
 Delectable to sight, nor wanting change
 Diversified of hill, and vale, and plain.
 Soft-sloping hills with dewy verdure clad,
 Enrich'd with fragrant flow'rs, whose splendor shone
 As vegetable gems. Calm overspread
 The shadowy-chequer'd woods, on vital trees
 Profus'd ambrosial fruits, breathing of youth,
 Purpureal-beaming thro' the wavy leaves,

Nectareous, grateful to th' unsated taste,
 The food of angels. These contiguous fann'd
 Inviting bow'rs of bliss, seats of delight,
 That redolent afar the genial air
 Scented with joy and dalliance, as they hung
 Crowning with graceful canopy the beds
 Of holy vales, where Solitude serene
 Dwelt with Tranquillity. Less soothing far
 Odorous breezes o'er Iberian vales
 Blow, thro' thick myrtle groves and orange bow'rs,
 Where the fond lover, hid in Solitude,
 (So feigns romance) under some arching grot
 Tells to the woods and streams his ardent love,
 In languid music from his sighing flute,
 Echoed around, till sweetest airs and sounds
 Lull his enraptur'd sense to dreamy sleep.
 Throughout these matchless scenes, celestial light
 Impearl'd the glittering dew, o'er banks and dales
 Luxuriant shed, which with its cool veil deck'd
 Spring ever-nascent, and with balmy juice
 Foster'd unpictur'd beauty. Fragrant less,
 Less fair past mention, shines the blushing rose,
 When to th' admiring eye at beamy noon
 Enthron'd in leaves amid her budding train
 Coy she half-opes her velvet globe, and sheds
 Wide thro' the conscious air and sentient shrubs
 Purpureal grace and fragrance. Thro' each vale
 Meand'ring ran rivers of happiness,
 Fed by fresh fountains of perpetual life,
 That silvery-winding shew'd their sparkling waves

Book
 V.

V. 78—107.

As pearls, reflected in the beams of heav'n,
 While as they murm'ring roll'd on lustrous gems,
 Music pursued their wand'ring, and delight
 Waited their gentle fall, ere underneath
 Some silent grot diffus'd, their gurgling lapse
 Retir'd embosom'd. Oft in such recess
 Veil'd amid shades of peace, in blissful ease,
 Angels repos'd, and tun'd melodious lays
 In secret, to extatic hymns of joy,
 Which to the waiting echo soft-betray'd
 Their sweet-redoubled cadence, and diffus'd
 From grot to grot, responsive borne away
 Their tender burden. Oft amid these scenes
 Wafting their airy course, angelic forms
 Delay'd their speed and hov'ring in delight
 Listen'd the rapt'rous strains which floating rose
 Amid the gentle air, unconscious whence
 Issued th' enchanting melodies. Around,
 Birds in consorted quires their numerous song
 Warbling attun'd, which thro' the vivid groves
 Zephyrs on whispering pinions gently breath'd
 To purling waterfalls, that dashing wav'd
 Refreshing coolness with harmonious sound.
 Less grateful-mild (with earthly scene compar'd)
 Streams the fresh influence of the ev'ning breeze
 Breath'd o'er the landscape, while the sinking sun
 Purples the west and thro' the vocal air
 Scatters his rosy beams, what time the herds
 Homeward retiring o'er the dewy ground
 Responsive low, and on the gilded trees

Book
 V.

 V. 108—137.

Stiller, the birds sit calm, warbling aloud
 A farewell concert to departing day.
 The varied plains in faint-receding hues
 Soften'd to tender distance, and display'd
 Verdure and grateful radiance, more serene
 Than light of gems, with lustre than the moon
 More rich, when sailing thro' the starry heav'n,
 Full-orb'd, she paints the earth with fluid gold.
 Lakes in their crystal bosoms wide around
 Reflected heaven's gorgeous firmament,
 Magnific, of cerulean tint, with gems
 Set as with stars, and thousand glories, pure
 As living suns, beaming celestial day.
 Amid whose splendid dome smooth-floating clouds,
 Wreath'd from the fumes of incense, nard, or myrrh
 With lofty hand from golden censers thrown
 By angel choirs, or odours borne on high
 From ever-burning altars, scatter'd down
 Varying reflections o'er heav'n's pearly floor
 And emerald seas, still-changing as beheld,
 Calm-evanescent. Whether purple morn
 Bade from their silvery breasts ambrosial dews
 Meekly descend, or to their soft embrace
 Eve, graceful-sailing in her modest car,
 Yielded resplendent light, and bade them veil
 Heav'n's glories in soft shade, while she induc'd
 Delicious twilight o'er expecting realms,
 Mother of contemplation and the bliss
 Of pensive seriousness, yet ting'd with gold
 And purple radiance their fair-streaming robes.

Book
VI.

V. 138--167.

Seasons less genial deck'd the joyous earth
 When Sol with Venus in the Rhodian isle
 Slept, while the gratulant heav'n's rain'd drops of gold, Book
 And over hill and dale each fragrant flow'r VI.
 Grateful of orient hue spontaneous bloom'd. V. 168—197.
 Sometimes reflected from innumerable thrones,
 Ere day declines, ærial glories burst
 Proud on the ravish'd gaze, illustrious-rear'd
 As rainbows, glowing in magnificent range
 With many a colour'd arch, expansive-stretch'd
 Triumphal o'er mid heav'n, thro' whose bright pomp
 Angels in glitt'ring chariots pass sublime
 In long array of princely pageantry
 At solemn festivals, while in their looks
 Shines immortality, their argent robes
 Pretext with golden reeds, ensigns of state.
 Thus they behold the rich effulgence mild
 Recede, admiring; then thro' other climes
 Delight to wander, eager to survey
 Heav'n's beauteous wonders, lavishly dispers'd
 Exhaustless: such as human language fails
 To picture by a name. Beyond compare
 Luxuriant less, nor so profuse of bliss
 Smile the glad regions and balm-dropping groves
 Of Araby the blest, where verd'rous vales
 Teeming with fruits from ev'ry country met
 Cool court the willing feet, and fragrant gales
 Smelling of cassia, aloes, nard, and balm
 Possess the melting sense. Then smit with love
 And grateful adoration, they converse

Of God's eternal goodness and new hymns
 Frame to his praise. Some ev'n beyond the bounds
 Of heav'n delight new knowledge to acquire
 And pierce the secrets of the universe
 Which thence in prospect lies. Oft on bold wing
 From the celestial verge they shoot away
 Amid the rolling worlds and endless suns
 Till hov'ring near their various orbs, they mark
 Their motions, laws, spheres, shapes, and habitants.
 Then back to heav'n they speed, lost in amaze
 At God's omnipotence: or frequent-charg'd
 With solemn embassy from pow'r Supreme
 Their voyage thro' immeasurable space
 They steer on wing, and execute with joy
 Divine behests.

Book
 V.

V. 198—227.

Thus pass'd the new-arriv'd
 Rapt in serene delight, thro' various climes
 Of rural countries, till their steps approach
 Regions, by populous multitudes possess'd,
 That shew'd as cities, and to view display'd
 Magnificence and glories save in heav'n
 Seen never. Seats of sov'reign majesty,
 Where thro' extensive empires mightiest pow'rs
 Of archangelic Seraphs held their state
 And regal dignities: dominion high
 Kingdoms and principalities display'd
 With pomp unutterable: imperial tow'rs
 Blazing with riches, thick as stars, allur'd
 On ev'ry hand th' astonish'd gaze, high-rais'd
 Where palaces innumerable shone,

Cherubic domiciles, with all delight
 Replete, that with sublime effulgence wide
 Conspicuous flam'd, as here were center'd sole
 All honour, glory, splendor, and renown.
 Thro' gates of beaten gold, whose massy frame
 At frequent even distance parts the walls
 Of polish'd alabaster, which surround
 These sumptuous regions, the resplendent throng
 Pass in procession vast, and aw'd survey
 The gorgeous structures, mansions which they knew
 Not distant from the throne of Deity.
 For could not glories such as these, tho' known,
 Rest ev'n of angels unadmir'd. Around
 Innumerable, infinite, exact,
 Pillars of jasper, beaming living flame,
 Each variously inwreath'd with gems, and flow'rs
 Celestial, wrought in gold, uprear'd on high
 Proud-swelling domes, whose dazzling roofs combin'd
 Radiance and grace surpassing thought. These vied
 (Tho' changeful admiration check'd compare)
 With unprofaned temples, rais'd sublime
 By boundless pow'r, of purest chrysolite
 Transparent chief, where thousand sapphires blaz'd
 With azure light, and rubies, morning-ray'd,
 Mingled their shine with purple amethyst,
 Sardine, or opal, iris-hued,
 Or sooth'ning glows, and Eve's Hesperian throne
 Calmly descending, while the painted skies
 In clouds array'd of crimson, purple, and gold

Glitter afar, and o'er the landscape shed
 A Tyrian light, soften'd by falling dew.
 Within th' apartments of these splendid frames
 Stately pilasters of empyreal gold
 Rose, while the pomp of precious woods around
 Commingling lavish ornament, with scent
 Of odorous cedar, myrtle groves, or palm,
 Supported cielings of unrivall'd view:
 Sculptur'd with emblems and devices rare,
 Where richest metals ductile took all shapes,
 Or heav'nly pencils, dipp'd in hues divine,
 Display'd all fancy's favor'd lineaments,
 In prodigality of art. Here oft
 Angelic orders underneath the shade
 Of trophied banners hierarchal met,
 Gorgeous-array'd, their starry-glittering wings
 Emergent from beneath purpureal robes
 Or vests of purest white, distinguish'd all
 By diadems and crowns, and in their hands
 Illustrious sceptres borne with modest grace.
 Innumerable met; in numbers more,
 In splendor richer, than the rays of morn
 Shot o'er the world by Phœbus, when he leaves
 The ocean-chambers, and ascending fires
 With undiminish'd pow'r the earth and skies,
 And decks each green sea-wave in golden light.
 Thro' lofty porches and vast-arching halls
 Moves thus the bright assemblage, passing bow'rs
 Of silv'ry texture, workmanship divine,
 Where art-rais'd fountains spouting liquid gold

Book
 VI.

V. 258—287.

Play'd various, till their solemn steps arrive
 Refulgent altars on the brilliant floor,
 Mosaic-wrought, beset, with blossoms pure
 And spotless lilies hung, on whose chaste top
 Frankincense fum'd, and heav'nly odours breath'd
 Ineffable delight. Awhile they send
 Their fragrant off'rings, graceful here dispos'd:
 Then for sublimer festival prepare;
 And high-ascending steps of amber clear
 Or pure jacynct, with regal air they mount
 Thrones of inestimably glorious state,
 Emblazon'd o'er with sumptuous turrets, rais'd
 'Mid sight-distracting splendor.

Seated soon

Accordant all their solemn harmony
 Triumphantly begin, and joyful raise
 Unisonant their choral extacies,
 Innumeros-voic'd, to thousand dulcet strings
 Responsive sweet, with living melody
 Awake, and tun'd to tender-breathing flutes,
 Or deep sonorous air of organ-tubes.
 Loud halleluias and hosannas rose
 Resounding thro' mid heav'n, while they extol
 In swelling strains re-iterate the praise
 Of their ALMIGHTY MAKER, and advance
 His goodness, pow'r, HIS wisdom infinite;
 His glory, truth, HIS majesty supreme:
 Immortal essence, universal King,
 HE sole dominion pre-existent held
 Before all worlds; HE all created things

Book
 VI.

V. 288—317.

Made for HIS pleasure: thro' eternal time
 HE reigns omnipotent, dispensing joy
 And peace, and bliss, boundless, and without end.

BOOK
 VI.

V. 318-345.

Thus sang th' angelic choirs, whose dwellings pass'd,
 Th' archangel chief his following train conducts
 Tow'rd his own honour'd empire, soon perceiv'd;
 Known by innumerable blazing spires,
 Signal of wealth and pomp inimitable.
 'Mid which arriv'd thro' lofty portals wide
 Flaming of burnish'd agate, they behold
 Splendor ineffable and matchless grace,
 Whose soul-entrancing vision in amaze
 Usurps th' unsettled eye. Superbest fanes
 Of hyacinthine beam, aloft adorn'd
 With tow'rd pinnacles, and mighty domes
 Of lustrous gold, inlaid with starry gems,
 Allur'd on ev'ry hand the ravish'd gaze.
 While vast pavilions, the consign'd abodes
 Of radiant demigods, magnific rear'd
 Their deathless glories. Not Persepolis,
 Queen of the richest East, renown'd of old,
 Shone so illustrious in her height of pow'r,
 When, the vast Babylonian empire won,
 Media and Persia their dominions join'd,
 And mightiest Potentates adoring brought
 Their costly gifts, and swell'd her royal state.

Now issuing from their lofty seats, appear'd
 Innumerable hosts of glorious spirits,

Intent with rev'rence due in bright array **Book**
 To meet their Sov'reign, known return'd : high chiefs **VI.**
 Of his imperial realm, illustrious states, **V. 346-374**
 And potent hierarchs, than eastern Kings
 Richer-adorn'd, when on some solemn day
 Or of inauguration, or wont rites
 Of Gods, in costliest pearls adorn'd and gold
 Turban, and flowing silk, they pass superb
 Thro' their metropolis, while nobles crowd
 The vast procession to resplendent mosques
 And high pagodas, whose proud minarets
 And glist'ring domes the sun at beamy noon
 Scarce emulates, but gilds with ling'ring ray,

These deck'd in golden zones and in their hands
 Palms ever-florent, while unfading youth
 Various in glory mark'd their spotless mien
 With acclamation loud receive th' approach
 Of their high Monarch, and desirous all
 To hear his purpos'd pleasure, lead direct
 Tow'rd his own great pavilion, their glad steps
 Responsive falling to the rapt'rous sound
 Of thousand lyres, clarions, and vocal flutes
 Which wide the tide of music roll'd o'er heav'n.
 Full soon the joyous multitude arrive
 The structur'd palace, where effulgence blaz'd
 Incomparable, and exalted spoke
 Monarchal sov'reignty, and mightiest pow'r.
 Arrang'd in gorgeous majesty, it stood
 Tow'ring of brilliant jasper, or of bright

Marble, excelling all of Paphian frame
 Or fam'd Palmyra's boasted monuments.
 Less haughty that Ephesian temple shone
 Rais'd to Diana, whose magnific pomp
 Kings joy'd to rear, while in the splendid work
 All Asia toil'd for ages, proud to found
 The beaming glory of th' astonish'd world.
 Nor the vast palace of the Median King,
 Great Cyrus, equall'd this, tho' all its frame
 On ev'ry side with living lustre glow'd,
 And prodigal art throughout the pillar'd mass
 Cemented richest gems with fluid gold.
 Now the supreme procession in array
 Of throng'd extent within its ample domes
 And vast-o'ershadowing halls their pow'rs dispose,
 While their great Emperor with his countless train
 Leads solemn thro' the midst his open'd way;
 Nor stays, ere he with kingly step ascends
 His throne of blazing porphyry, afar
 Flaming with light too radiant to behold.
 Might seem that here Pactolus had effus'd
 The total treasures of his native gold;
 Or all Golconda's gems, and miny stores
 Of rich Potosi, in this spot were met:
 So glorious shone that wond'rous frame beyond
 The stretch of mortal thought. For not to sight
 Irradiate thus, the Indian boiga spreads
 Under the palm or cedar's wavy shade
 His many-colour'd scales, while as he moves
 Dances a dazzling chain of emeralds, knit

BOOK

VI.

V. 315—404.

With rubies, sapphires, and the golden blaze
 Of topaz, emulous of ev'ning's beams,
 Each ever-varying to the ravish'd eye.

BOOK
 VI.

V. 405—434.

Around its royal wealth depended low
 Falling in graceful folds, a tissue fair
 Wrought by angelic hands in social hours
 Of happy ease: and from the dome-swell'd roof
 A wide, transparent, circling interval
 Threw on the beatific scene a flood
 Of heav'nly rays. Amid this matchless pomp
 Rose Michael, sov'reign hierarch, whose throne
 Subjects so many and so glorious held.
 Dignity in his port, and on his brows
 Sat puissance and imperial state, yet blent
 With mildest look, where universal love
 Shone, and benevolence. His bright aspect
 Might seem the morning sun, when seated high
 Amid his saffron chariot he prepares
 To cross the blue-arch'd sky, with floods of light
 To cheer and renovate th' expecting world.
 Soon his magnific sceptre high-upheld,
 The godlike pow'r his mighty purpose spoke.

“ Empyreal glories, essences divine,
 Seraphs, and cherubim, all orders bright,
 Listen our meditations, and our will.
 Needs must we more admire, the more we know,
 God's everlasting goodness, and extol
 His wond'rous attributes, who thron'd in bliss

Still in creation joys, and from himself,
 Nature's prime fount and cause, unceasing pours
 Thro' various worlds of vast infinity
 Life unconfin'd and boundless happiness.
 He, from eternity all-perfect, pure,
 By the sole word of his omnipotence
 Spontaneous made what of created being
 We e'er behold or know: and sure intends
 All things in chain of endless union
 Shall sometime blend, and all their pow'rs enlarg'd,
 Gradual, shall know each other, and perceive
 Him above all SUPREME, till lost in him,
 The good shall here enjoy unfading bliss,
 And with more worthy praise thro' endless time
 Know and adore him, Parent of all good.
 Sure not for us alone (that we of all
 God's favor'd creatures thus should sole enjoy
 Bliss super-eminent) we deem all these
 Vernal delights and whatso'er can charm
 The ravish'd sense with lavish dignity
 Created sole; sure not for us entire,
 Tho' angels, and in presence of heav'n's King
 Exalted to bright thrones, but other hosts
 Of creatures now inferior shall be rais'd
 These glories to participate, become
 Ev'n as ourselves, our equals and compeers,
 If worthy found by virtue and desire
 To know and execute their Maker's will.
 'Mong others, an innumerable race of men
 Creatures of heav'n high-favor'd, on their earth

Book

VI.

v. 432-462.

First form'd, when all the universal worlds
 Echoed with songs and shout, that it had pleas'd
 Omnipotence with fair creations new
 The rebel angels' havoc to repair,
 Shall hither after death, (doom of their kind,
 Forfeit of disobedience) if they live
 Virtuous on their short theatre of life,
 Ascend, and share with us heav'n's endless joys,
 All we perceive around, or e'er may know,
 In full fruition. Them th' All-good Supreme
 Created happy, in their fleshly mould
 Breath'd a divinity, a living soul,
 Immortal, of his own bright image part,
 That man, created thus, to angels seem'd
 Little inferior, and with Deity
 Held free and full communion: but th' All-wise
 One sole condition to their bliss annex'd,
 The pledge of their obedience, that this soul
 Should its own dignity and nature high
 Cautious maintain, nor fall, debas'd, to serve
 The fleshly appetite, as sordid brutes,
 Irrational. Yet man, alas! seduc'd
 By Satan's tempting guile, forgets his state,
 Falls, and incurs the penalty foredoom'd,
 Death, and his Maker's alienated ire.
 Deity can no more with sinful man
 Degraded, fall'n, his once angelic soul
 To flesh subservient now, hold as before
 Blissful communion, free: but must receive
 Atonement of offending flesh, and death,

The threaten'd penalty. The justice else
 And truth of God were forfeit, which to hope
 Ev'n sin would own impossible. Yet now
 Mysterious love divine, from God himself
 Pure-emanating, offers to assume
 A fleshly substance, and to undergo
 Ev'n ignominious death to save a race
 Of late so favor'd and so blest, from death
 And final ruin, as not falling sole
 From their own proper impulse, but seduc'd
 By God's fell foe, on ev'l and death intent.
 Eternal justice, still rememb'ring mercy,
 Accepts the ransom, which at destin'd time,
 Predicted, cloth'd in fleshly shape, appears
 Benignant, humble, on man's earth: and here
 Reveals to men tidings of heav'n, till then
 Unknown or disbeliev'd, and tells where lie
 The realms of true, unfading happiness.
 Not found on earth, tho' studious reason seek
 Her there so oft in vain: sole to be won
 'Mid these glad regions near the fount of bliss
 In future life, immortal, after death
 (On each man still impos'd) by habits firm
 Of goodness in his transient, earthly life,
 The second pledge of his obedience made
 To his appeas'd Creator's will. Which full
 To qualify each humblest meanest man
 To know and strict observe, that gracious Friend,
 Come from the fount of truth, deigns to diffuse
 Plain, simple rules, with easy force applied

Book
VI.

V. 493—522.

To each man's heart, whose fond observance works
 Ev'n upon earth, peace, joy and calm content,
 Earnest of future bliss; for these endear
 Virtue for its own sake, and with mild sway
 Adapt mankind to know and cherish good;
 Whence we may hail them for ourselves and heav'n,
 Fit nor unworthy Peers, thro' endless time.
 This Satan knows, and therefore labours still
 Doctrines and hopes so pow'rful to o'erwhelm.
 Hence his mad rage, where'er these heav'nly truths
 Disseminate o'er earth their cheering light,
 Burns unrelenting-fell, to hide and check
 Their growing progress, and retain mankind
 In the dread paths of evil, wars, and death;
 That hence he may secure their hapless race
 His subjects, to possess his own dark world.
 Now o'er one favor'd kingdom of the earth,
 The Queen of Europe's isles, this sacred faith
 Diffusive spreads, whose high example soon
 To distant regions of the terrene globe
 Shall waft these joyful hopes, and in one chain
 Social connect the sons of other climes:
 While its great Monarch, whose capacious mind
 Heav'n has illum'd with science pure, and rays
 Diversified of wisest, fairest truth,
 Labours unceasing o'er his realm to found
 Peace, arts, religion, commerce, order, laws.
 But to oppose these good and high designs
 The fiercest pow'r of hell's proud King is brought
 And full-exerted. A terrific race

Book
 VI.

V. 523—552.

Of savage, superstitious, Pagan foes,
 Lawless invaders, breathing endless wars,
 Are by th' infernal arts of Demon-pow'rs
 Inspir'd to dreadful deeds, hideous to name.
 And, not with common subtlety content,
 Which late we foil'd, the gloomy King of death
 Burning with fell revenge, has newly call'd
 From the grim climes of darkness num'rous hosts
 Of unensampled guile and blackest soul,
 Whose most mysterious wiles incite these foes
 To trust implicit in feign'd, warlike Gods
 And em'lous rage ungovern'd to obtain
 Their favor, and heav'n's joys, thro' blood and death;
 That such infatuate thirst for ceaseless war
 May sure o'erpow'r the Christian host, and overwhelm
 England in final ruin, if our aid
 Prevent not. Nor will slender pow'r suffice.
 Oppos'd against so num'rous, subtle strength,
 The bands angelic, late to earth dispatch'd,
 Unequal prove, to wage perpetual war
 And meet at ev'ry point such restless foes.
 Wherefore to heav'n you find me now return'd
 With these accompanying Peers, to tell our state
 And bring from these blest climes new-chosen aids.
 Of you a brave and noble band select
 Shall with our pow'rs return to earth, and join
 Our glorious labours in the cause of heav'n
 And injur'd man against God's envious foe.
 But first occasion needs that we demand
 Permission from the High Supreme to add

BOOK
 VI.

V. 553—582.

Your numbers to our present pow'rs, and ask
 Humbly his fav'ring blessing on our toils;
 So shall our task with surer hope succeed.
 Therefore prepare we now with meekest act
 Of solemn adoration to approach
 The radiant skirts of his eternal throne
 Where dwells enshrin'd the present Deity:—
 And there with decent awe prefer our pray'rs."

BOOK
 VI.

V. 583—610.

The mighty Hierarch ended, and his voice
 Hail'd with their gratulation all the host
 Of radiant spirits that around his throne
 Triumphant throng'd. Loud roll'd their glad applause
 As on some happy festival of joy
 Music's full-swelling tide, concordant wak'd
 From all sweet instruments with voices join'd,
 Harmonious fills the sounding dome of heav'n.

Nor stay'd th' august assemblage, but full soon
 Array'd in glorious order they advance
 Tow'rd the refulgent region, where aloft
 Exalted in mid heav'n supreme resides
 All-perfect Deity, and calm approach
 In solemn silence the resplendent sea
 Of radiant chrystal or of jasper pure
 Glowing as fire, whose blazing splendor girt
 Th' throne eternal of Omnipotence;
 Rais'd inaccessible, from face of which
 All heav'n retires and earth, and whatsoe'er
 Created being dwells thro' boundless space.

Arriv'd the confines of th' empyreal blaze
 Rapt in extatic bliss, surrender'd, all
 Feel the full presence of Divinity,
 And meekly fall, adoring. For to gaze
 Upward presum'd not the most glorious spirit,
 But all before their glittering count'nance
 Alike extended their immaculate wings,
 And in sublimest transport lost, receive
 The blissful effluence of God's sov'reign throne.—

Book

VI.

V. 611—639.

But how that all-transcendent throne, on which
 Archangels cannot look, can man describe,
 Or human words portray to human thought?
 God's presence, pure, eternal, increate
 Essential light, before whose radiant blaze
 The sun is darkness, where in majesty
 Incomprehensible he lives enshrin'd
 And fills with glories on bright glories rais'd
 In still increasing bliss, another heav'n
 High 'bove all height, of space interminable
 And save of him unknown as unpossess'd:
 Whence at one glance his sole Omniscience sees
 The boundless range of vast infinity,
 Creation's round immense with all her worlds
 Innumerable intervolving, and beyond
 Chaos, and in her depths hell's dismal climes,
 And beyond these infinitude of space
 Unoccupied and void, where Fancy's self,
 If she presume to follow, sinks absorb'd.
 Yet HE thro' space which no circumference owns

Alone surveys, fills, guides, supports, all worlds: **Book**
 And thro' each orb, thro' unconceiv'd extent, **VL**
 All-present, sheds benignant influence, **V. 640-668.**
 Perpetual fount of life, and light, and bliss.

How low, how mean seem'd now, with these compar'd,
 All other glories of celestial thrones
 Or arch-angelic splendors: how confin'd,
 Their loftiest states: how weak, their mightiest pow'rs,
 To veil th' insufferable brightness, roll'd
 In beamy floods from the eternal throne;
 Rose o'er its outer verge a mighty arch,
 High as the bow that paints the show'ry heav'n,
 Whose sight-refreshing green on eyes o'erpower'd
 Shone as an emerald. In sublime array
 Nearer the seat supreme, magnific stood
 Innumerable thrones, whereon appear'd
 Highest archangels, their diviner brows
 Girt with resplendent crowns of purest gold,
 Enjoying bliss ineffable, who oft
 Propitious rear with sceptred hand sublime
 Refulgent censers, breathing odours, fraught
 With incense wafted from the grateful praise
 And pray'rs of all God's creatures infinite,
 Dispers'd throughout his boundless universe.
 Oft they themselves, their kingly sway resign'd,
 Bending o'er beryll harps, from golden strings
 And dulcet instruments of heav'nly frame
 Elicit tones so soft, such thrilling sounds
 To sweetest voices answering sweet, in strains

Grateful to God the Author of their bliss
 That by the flowing harmony entranc'd
 The choral spirits, in extatic pause,
 Dissolve in holiest rapture.

Book
 VI.

V. 669—697.

Nor alone
 From God's eternal presence these enjoy'd
 Beatitude yet unconceiv'd and paid
 Him eager adoration, but conven'd
 Ever before the happy-beaming throne
 Thousands of thousands of angelic hosts,
 Innumerable stand, celestial spirits,
 Seraphic kingdoms, and empyreal pow'rs
 Nobler, elect intelligences, rang'd
 In glorious companies, each sharing joys
 Purer as nearer each permitted draw
 Tow'rd unrestricted Deity, and know
 More perfect, nature's universal cause.
 Innumerable more their shining ranks extend
 Than all the nations of the terrene globe
 Commingled, when the earth at gen'ral doom
 Shall yield up all her pristine habitants
 Restor'd to second life, in face of heav'n
 To meet in full assembly, and attend
 Their final fate from this bright throne proclaim'd.
 These ever-living states in union vast
 Before th' All-sov'reign throne delighted yield
 Meet homage, and in boundless concert praise
 Th' All-perfect source of good, and sole to him
 Ascribe all pow'r, all riches, wisdom, bliss
 Glory and honour. 'Mid their radiate steps

Thus they in universal joys absorb'd,
 Link'd in one wondrous chain of social love
 Enjoy unbounded union, and delights
 In varied harmony, while o'er them Peace,
 Dove-like, still waves her soft, and silvery wings
 Whispering of endless happiness. Survey'd
 Awhile these heav'nly glories, where they stood
 Hail'd by unnumber'd peers, th' immortal host
 Arriv'd from earth's dim confines, now approach
 The sacred steps that tow'rd the living throne
 Lead up direct. When thro' disparted way
 Seven high archangels, their empyreal shapes
 Veil'd with their fulgent wings in meekest awe,
 Like glitt'ring rainbows bent, softer in hues,
 Ascend the hill of ever-during gold,
 Or flaming diamond, which transcendent rose
 The chosen altar of Omnipotence.
 Prostrate, in bliss unutterable lost,
 Th' immortal embassy adoring bend:
 And down before th' Almighty King of Kings
 Cast their illustrious crowns, disclaiming pow'r:
 Nor broke expressive silence, till submit
 Th' imperial Michael thus their will reveal'd,

Book
 VI:

V. 698—726.

“ All-holy, pure, incomprehensible,
 Eternal King, thou, whose Omnipotence
 Surpasseth not thy goodness infinite,
 Cause universal, whose Omniscient Spirit
 Created, still pervades, sustains all worlds,
 Thou see'st on earth, (of thy creation fair

Lov'd part) thy favor'd creature, Man, assail'd
 By Satan's deadly wiles, who labours still
 T' extirpate from the late enlighten'd globe
 Knowledge of thee, now spreading thro' her climes
 Inducing peace and happiness. He still
 Burns to restore dark ignorance, and faith
 In idols who delight in war and blood.
 Late hath he pass'd to earth, a host immense
 Conducting from his own tremendous world,
 All madly bent in ruin more profound
 To whelm man's race. Thou know'st, yet all his arts
 Seeing, permittest; for thy wondrous ways
 Excel conception of all bounded minds.
 Else sure that pow'r, which into being call'd
 Yon universe with all her countless worlds,
 Ev'n heav'n, and us thy sons; created ev'n
 Satan himself, with all his rebel host,
 Whose horrid glory now is to insult
 Thee, perfect good: that Pow'r Omnipotent
 Which being gave, if so thy Will approv'd,
 As instant could annihilate: yet thou,
 Unmov'd, foreseeing, know'st the utmost end
 Of his perverted malice, and delight'st
 Ever by providential, silent means
 To make that malice still elicit good.
 We cannot mark so far, nor without fear
 Our feebler understanding may survey
 His desp'rate, subtlest labours to overwhelm
 Still weaker man. Whence fancy and alarm
 Persuade us, our own efforts might even

BOOK
 VI.

V. 737—756.

Not void of use, t' oppose his deadly arts,
 And aid mankind against their ruthless foe.
 Suffer us then with those whom like desire
 Impels to tempt th' adventurous emprise,
 To earth descending, by our present aid
 Satan's dark machinations to oppose,
 Shielding mankind, as best our skill may deem."

Book
 VI.

V. 751—784.

He ceas'd: and suddenly the throne of God
 Darkness o'erspread. Lightnings and sounds unknown
 Of voices issuing roll'd around. Heav'n felt
 The sign, and trembled thro' her boundless realms.
 Down 'mid created space innumerable worlds
 Rolling commingled in their beamy spheres
 Shook on their steadfast axles. Earth herself,
 Suspended vast with all her oceans, shook,
 Acknowledging her Maker, uttering sounds
 Heard not so high, save by the conscious ear
 Of God alone. Hell, hid in chaos, knew
 The signal, shuddering thro' her dread abodes.
 Millions of angels instantaneous fall
 Prostrate o'er heav'n. Awfullest Silence reigns,
 Till from the viewless dark God spake these words.

"Can creature understand the ways of God?—
 But if ye so desire and dare th' attempt,
 Go, fearless. Aid mankind, as best ye deem.
 Yet patiently endure whate'er of wrong
 Or insult personal ye may receive
 From hell's bad spirits, nor yourselves pollute

With them in fight conflicting. Not to you
 I tell my secret counsels, which o'er rule
 The works of yonder universe. Still ye
 Trust to my constant Providence, which all
 Sees and permits, and by calm, silent means
 Unsearchable, makes all conduce for good."

BOOK
 VI.

V. 785—819.

Th' Almighty ceas'd. Her universal reign
 Silence resumes. Now from th' Eternal Throne
 Roll'd the dividing dark, and left unveil'd
 Brightness, which no created being endures.
 Th' empyreal Spirits from their sacred trance
 Uprise by myriads. Then attuning all
 Their soul-enlivening instruments, begin
 A solemn chorus of extatic sounds,
 Drawn from celestial harps, whose golden strings
 Touch'd by angelic fingers drop perfume,
 Or golden reeds of dulcet stop, combin'd
 In grateful harmony with swelling tones
 Blown from deep trumpets or loud organs' breath:
 That heav'n and all her glitt'ring confines rang
 Resounding with seraphic hymns, which far
 On wings of music roll'd their raptur'd praise.

" Great are thy wond'rous works, all-perfect good,
 Omnipotent: creation's King Supreme!
 Thou all this heav'n, and yon innum'rous orbs
 Which roll in various spheres thro' boundless space
 Mad'st of thy lib'ral goodness: of their ends
 And uses, watchful, as omniscient.
 Yet not for everlasting these endure,

But at their destin'd periods pass away
 Successive, till their countless habitants
 Meet before thee, their Maker, Father, King,
 Adoring, in their fit degrees of bliss;
 While ever better, brighter worlds, to heav'n
 Annex'd, assimilate in endless range,
 Thy love will frame anew. When like ourselves,
 Translated beings, spirits of the good
 Elect of thee, shall disembodied pierce
 Thy universal works magnificent,
 Shall gradual know thyself, fountain of bliss,
 Approaching ever thro' eternal time,
 Till all the kingdoms of thy universe
 Circle thy throne in one connected chain
 Of peace, and love, and perfect happiness."

BOOK
 VI.

V. 813—840.

The sacred chorus tremblingly repos'd,
 And now were heard alone the softer strains,
 Still wont in heav'n. Strait the commission'd band,
 Heralds and leaders of the new emprise,
 Joyful to hear their anxious suit obtain'd,
 Turn from th' empyreal blaze, and in array
 Move on abreast beneath their shadowy wings,
 While as they glide along the brilliant floor,
 Enamour'd zephyrs, breathing odours, fraught
 With cadence of celestial harmony,
 Making more sweet the balmy air of heav'n,
 Flutter with gentle play the varied plumes
 Of their wide-arching pinions, which commov'd
 Then sparkling wave, like agitated gems

Or beaten gold. Beneath their circling crowns
 Their orient locks in streaming ringlets play'd
 O'er their irradiate shapes.

BOOK
 VI.

V. 241—270.

So on they pass'd,
 Not unadmir'd by many a seraph-choir
 Circling on either hand: till now they reach,
 Descending those rich steps which to the throne
 Upled, th' associates of their mighty realm,
 From whom selected soon, a glorious band
 Of zealous spirits in compact array
 Wait the high conduct of the sov'reign chief
 On their new enterprize. Nor long delay'd
 Michael, their kingly hierarch, to assume
 Desired station at their head. And now
 Stretching their gold-bright vans, thro' midst of heav'n
 They steer their joyous course, a splendid train,
 Far-flying to the place where ready stood
 Numberless lofty chariots, fram'd for use
 Of ev'ry angel, who commission'd way
 Might oft times hold amid creation's worlds,
 On heav'nly-destin'd journey. Now the host
 Prepare their gorgeous cars, capacious, vast,
 Around whose total frame commingling blaz'd
 Topaz, and pearls, and gold. Soon all ascend,
 And seated high as if on countless thrones,
 In deep procession of immeasur'd breadth
 Superb, august, that eye might scarce contain
 Th' immense display, self-moving, all advance
 In slow, magnificent state o'er heav'n's wide realms,
 Attended by unnumber'd radiant hosts,

Eager to view the glorious throng depart,
Till now their ranks attain the farthest bounds
Of heav'n. In prospect here before them lies
The universe of nature, infinite.
Now stop the chariots. Soon the total mass,
Its quadrate dense disparting, gradual form
Abreast one long, immeasurable line
Extending o'er heav'n's brink.

They wait command,
The throng'd attendant pow'rs with voice confus'd
Betide them prosperous speed and safe return,
And now upsend afar a deaf'ning shout
That check'd awhile th' harmonious sounds of heav'n,
For sudden lo! the whole extended host
Launch instantaneous from heav'n's extreme verge
Down amid vacuous space, and guide direct,
Buoyant, serene, their gentle sloping way
Toward creation's worlds: while borne along
Rapid, soon distant seen, the glorious range
More splendid moves, than if a thousand suns
Should sail together thro' the vaulted sky.
The thronging angels on heav'n's chrystal brink
Admiring gaze, and mark the gliding cars
Approaching tow'rd creation's universe.
Yet might not eager admiration look
Devoid of fear, lest thro' such boundless space
Seeking the distant earth, they wander lost.
Till enter'd now amid the rolling orbs,
Soon from the straining ken the glimmering cars
Fade, gradual-lessening, then from sight conceal'd.

Or beaten gold. Beneath the
 Their orient locks in stream
 O'er their irradiate shaw

Book
 VI.

V. 101-130.

Not unadmir'd by
 Circling on
 Descending
 Upled
 From
 Moving hang and seem vast moving plains,,
 Up they gaze
 A world, yet void of fear. Oft deep below,
 And far around they turn their piercing ken,
 And see unnumber'd worlds of various bulk
 Moving thro' many a sphere diversified
 In choral harmony, whose shapes diverse
 Show'd mountains, vales, or shadowy-circling seas
 Adapted to their diff'ring habitants
 Here ever various Suns effuse their force,
 Whose flamy rays hurt not th' ætherial forms
 Of heav'nly spirits, but in brighter shine
 Of lustrous splendor deck'd their passing pomp.
 While as they mark the transient orbs recede,
 Still they behold thro' sphere succeeding sphere
 Innumerable masses, swelling vast, opaque,
 That to the moving host continual shew
 Varying eclipses, till at times arriv'd
 Fronting some intervening world, its bulk
 Hides total its fix'd Sun, and casts along
 A shadow, broad, enormous, over all
 The vast immeasur'd range of gliding cars.

Yet not to darkness then consign'd, for now
 The native splendor of their beamy forms
 Securely guides them thro' the dubious dusk :
 Till from behind a re-appearing Sun
 Obliquely shoots again his gradual rays.
 Between these spheres oft sudden from below
 With loud-astounding noise ascend immense
 Comets impetuous, which sublime display
 Broad-circling overhead one vast, bright blaze
 Of spreading fire. Startled, yet soon compos'd,
 The angels view their long elliptic flight,
 As darting between worlds thro' space untried
 These urge their way, taught by the pointing hand
 Of God, his messengers for wisest ends.
 Long thus the car-borne angels journey on,
 Till passing now amid th' external bounds
 (Known by a darker gleam of distant light)
 Of a vast circling, yet dividual, sphere,
 Nearest their eager view they glad behold
 A semicircle huge of hazy light,
 As if some rainbow of that duskier space
 Had fall'n, and on mid air incumbent lay :
 With bright'ning swell protrusive, stretching broad
 From pole to pole across a world immense,
 Dim-seen, opaque. Joyful they hail the sign,
 For now they know their rapid course has gain'd
 Th' exterior limits of that spacious sphere,
 Whose mighty concave holds man's earthly globe.
 Enlarging still in bulk, now plain they know
 Th' unwieldy planet whose far-distant orb

Book
 VI.

V. 931—960.

Urging along its slow, saturnine course
 Men after Saturn name. And now they mark
 Around ascending with unequal course
 Various lesser globes, which each dispense
 A wan, cold light upon that cheerless world.
 Now as th' advancing legion gradual sails,
 Wond'ring they view the broaden'd arch of light
 Far-stretching horizontal, round the midst
 Of Saturn's orb, at equal distance thrown,
 A circle, radiant, grand, immeasurable,
 Shedding propitious a reflected day
 O'er the mid regions of the gloomy frame.
 On its huge axis slowly-turn'd it roll'd
 In awful state progressive thro' the void
 Of the dim, twilight air. Whose regions pass'd,
 Forward the angel-host direct their view
 With piercing ken, in purpose bent to find
 The distant sun of this capacious sphere,
 Nor long in vain their keen-enquiring gaze
 Explor'd its object, which at length appear'd
 To their discerning view, at first a star
 Of larger, glorious frame, and soon increas'd
 Gradual, a ball of dull, and ruddy fire,
 As when from some high hill the Trav'ler views
 The full moon rising, with discolour'd orb
 Far in the hazy east. With quicken'd zeal
 Down thitherward they bend their yielding cars,
 Scattering soft light amid the sullen air
 Impetuous pierc'd. When lo! next strikes their view
 Seen on one hand, nor seeming far-remov'd,

Book
 VI.

V. 861—890.

A world ev'n more gigantic than the globe
 So lately pass'd. Awhile they gaze its form
 Stupendous, whose vast surface lighter shone
 Than that last world, but dusky-faint and sad :
 And know th' enormous frame, to whose vast pomp,
 Kingly-discern'd, Men add the name of Jove.
 Themselves admire how such a wond'rous shape
 Perpetual heaves his air-incumbent weight
 Still faithful thro' his own wide-ambient course
 Around the distant sun, which thence appears
 In shape inferior to the lucent orbs
 That round his own huge mass continual move,
 Ascending and descending with just course,
 Various, alternate, each eclipsing each,
 And to his own imperial state dispense
 Their ceaseless floods of tributary beams.—
 Th' angelic legion on these realms t'alight
 Attempt not: tho' desirous then to learn
 What habitants and occupations strange
 Befit this world prodigious. Anxious more
 Were all to reach man's earth, the destin'd end
 Of their long voyage. Cautious so they sail,
 Lest that wide-moving pomp o'erwhelm their train,
 In contact met: and underneath those orbs
 Rapid descend, which overhead ere long
 Sublime-o'ershadowing on their glorious road
 Passing appear, commov'd. The host advance
 Towr'd the magnific, still-enlarging sun,
 Wond'rous appearing thro' that space immense
 A vast immeasurable sea of light,

Book
 VI.

V. 891—920.

Brighter than glowing fire, or molten gold.
 Soon they behold, wheeling its sullen round
 Gloomy and sad, another mighty globe
 Of solemn port: no moon it seem'd to boast
 Swelling its state, but self-dependent roll'd
 In gradual course of haughty dignity
 Around the sov'reign sun, whose motion soon
 Knew the celestial band, and joyous hail'd
 As that majestic planet, from man's earth
 Less widely distant, to whose proud aspect
 Observant men have join'd the name of Mars.
 And now strait opposite the central sun
 The heav'nly legion seem, and soon discern
 Between his boundless ocean of bright rays
 And their own brilliant train, a beauteous world
 On which the monarch of perpetual day
 Diffus'd his sweetest beams; that hence it seem'd
 All fair, all summer, mid delicious air
 Calm-gliding thro' the blue expanse, around
 The genial source of light. No moon here beam'd,
 For none was needed, while its radiant course
 So favor'd shone thro' ever glitt'ring space.
 That soon th' observant angels recognize
 The planet fair, which mortal men surname
 The matchless Queen of beauty and of love.
 Nor did not then their dazzled ken perceive,
 Beyond, careering on its ardent course
 Nearest the full resplendent sun, an orb
 Oerwhelm'd in glist'ring radiance, which appear'd
 Darting on every side his piercing beams

Book

VI.

V. 1021—1050.

Instinct with light and heat, yet singly shone
 In magnitude less grand than those bright frames,
 Errant perceiv'd amid this glorious sphere.
 Nor did they gaze of its terrestrial name
 Ignorant, but discern the rapid orb,
 To whose fleet motion conscious men the name
 Add of the winged Mercury. Their speed
 Th' impatient legion hasten glad, for now
 They know their certain course not distant far
 From man's expected earth, their anxious port.
 Thence thro' the bright-illumin'd æther wide
 Around they gaze, nor far remov'd perceive
 Seen on one hand in her own beamy zone
 'Twixt the proud Mars and Venus' radiant way
 The planet Earth, known by th' attendant globe
 Which o'er her hung. Instant the joyous host
 Utter a shout, which through the boundless air
 Resounding high amid the peopled space
 Pass'd, echoed far from rolling world to world.

Book
 VI.

V. 1051—1079.

And now nought intercepts the full display
 Of the round Earth with her o'erhanging moon
 In prospect plain, magnificently grand;
 O'er which the temper'd sun dispens'd his light
 Of genial radiance fair, serenely mild:
 While as the chariots rapid move, the earth
 Swells out immense, disclosing to the sight
 Her shining seas, and solid continents,
 Broad interchange: while swell'd no less the moon
 Displaying caverns vast, and seas, and shores

And tow'ring mountains numerous rang'd along
 Of various form. Swift-gliding soon o'er these,
 The radiant chariots, in conjunct array,
 Stop, hov'ring: and ere long with gradual poise
 Descending settle on the glimm'ring tops
 Of the moon's hills, here first (as late resolv'd)
 Alighting. Seated thus, the angels gaze
 On the vast scene around, and mark what now
 Seem stars on stars to distance infinite
 Extended. Backward then their wond'ring eyes
 They bend along their own immeasur'd course,
 And see the lessen'd sun, and those last orbs
 So fair, diminish'd now to glorious stars;
 And far beyond survey the countless worlds
 Which late they pass'd, appearing now to view
 Millions of twinkling lights.

At such display

Awhile in admiration lost, they pause,
 Till their attentive leader Michael broke
 Enraptur'd Silence with these thoughts express'd.

“Astonishing and awful sure must be
 Our recollected thought, nor can we fail
 Profoundest admiration and meek sense
 Both of God's goodness and omnipotence,
 When we reflect that some short ages past,
 Within our own remembrance, all these worlds
 And radiant spheres, which now our course has cross'd,
 Had no existence: but dark, formless, void,
 Chaos tumultuous roar'd where these bright orbs

Book
 VI.

V. 980—1008.

Now roll in beauteous harmony, and fill
 With cheerful life before unpeopled space!
 Unthought in heaven, save by the prescient mind
 Of God alone, who pre-existent there
 From all eternity perhaps had liv'd
 Alone, superlatively blest, ere yet
 Perfect spontaneous goodness mov'd him first,
 Delighting in creation, to create
 A race of angels to enjoy and know
 Him, source of happiness : degrees diverse,
 And orders, and in diff'rent ages made,
 Immortal most, or all. Since we ourselves
 So many æras of revolving time,
 Seeming (so blest they roll'd) but as a day,
 Remember to have pass'd in tranquil bliss
 With our Creator King, or ever yet
 Swoln with ambition the archangel high,
 Satan, with his perfidious pow'rs rebell'd,
 And soon was cast from heaven in dreadful fight
 Down to th' infernal deep. Then to repair
 Heaven's loss, and add splendor and glories new
 To his creation, we remember well
 When his omnipotence determin'd first
 To form this universe and all these worlds,
 Each with its proper habitants, to each
 By all-creative wisdom suited well :
 Among the rest, yon earth then moulded fair,
 And on her happy globe a creature man
 Of heaven high-favor'd, form'd for joy and bliss;
 Which he enjoy'd, till him God's envious foe

BOOK
 VI.

v. 1009—1038.

Seduc'd to disobedience, tho' forewarn'd.
 Then we remember, when her genial face
 A deluge of destructive waters spread ;
 Which all her beauties in confusion whelm'd
 And shapeless ruins, whose rude vestiges
 Ev'n yet remain, broke into continents
 And seas, and rocky shores, and craggy hills.
 And now we know, that at some fated time
 When the full number of the good elect
 Shall join the heav'nly choirs, yon rolling earth,
 With these surrounding elements, shall yield
 Their being to destructive flames of fire.
 Then from their flagrant ashes shall arise
 Other more perfect worlds, which shall be link'd
 In glorious range to heav'n, and all these orbs
 May undergo some better, happier change
 At God's due seasons, and perhaps be dwelt
 By angels and the spirits of the blest,
 Thro' endless ages still more perfect growing,
 Till gradual they attain honour supreme,
 Become archangels, near the throne of God
 Enshrin'd on radiant seats, partaking there
 His presence, glories, and unutter'd joys.
 But let us now descend : for these high thoughts,
 Proper alone to God, absorb our pow'rs
 In contemplations of astonishment ;
 That we forget our purpos'd embassy,
 And themes, more fitting our conception.—
 Prepare we now to seek Britannia's isle."

Book
VI.

V. 1139—1167.

So as he spoke, a pensive holy trance
 Which held th' angelic train in mute delight,
 Yielded diviner feelings to rich cells
 Of happy memory. All now assent,
 And from their station'd cars the joyful host
 In splendid range, descend. Then at command
 Forward their way directing, half on foot,
 Half flying, thro' the pure ætherial air
 Serene without a cloud, on even wings
 O'er the bright varied surface of the moon
 All glide along, repairing to the verge
 Whence plain they can survey th' adjacent earth.
 Downward they gaze, all eager to discern
 Where mid her various lands and mingling seas
 Lay Albion's pleasant isle, engirt with waves;
 While as the earth with ever-changing scene
 Turn'd gradual her vast bulk, they soon perceive
 Heav'd into light far on the utmost verge
 A glimm'ring isle, gray-swelling on the view,
 Till clear it now display'd a fair extent
 Of gently-waving hills, and vales, and plains,
 And winding rivers, deck'd with sun and shade
 Various. Appear'd its placid clime t' enjoy
 A temp'rate, genial air: favor'd it seem'd
 Beyond the other climes not distant seen;
 Which shew'd, some black with rude-projecting rocks
 Inhospitably barren: some appear'd
 Parch'd by too fervid rays, their verdure all
 Embrown'd and sad: others enwrapt in snows
 Seem'd as one glitt'ring waste, wild, dreary, cold.

Book
 VI.

V. 1168—1197.

While to the fancy Albion's verdant plains
 Kind, genial breezes and mild airs refresh'd,
 Blown from her circling seas, that fair around
 All nature smil'd. Pleas'd the celestial band
 Survey the scene, impatient to descend :
 And mounting soon their ready chariots, all
 On the broad summit of the lunar hills
 Wait, eager to depart. When mindful still
 Of their high embassy, their zealous chief
 Thus to the band his careful thought propos'd.

Book
 VI.

V. 1198—1225.

“ Descending strait to earth, our earliest care
 Must be to join our former pow'rs : and learn
 From these the state of each opposing host.
 If yet the Christian camp, their destin'd charge,
 Uninjur'd rest from Satan's dark deceits ;
 Not yet provok'd to battles premature :
 If too the parted leaders have return'd
 With new-assembled pow'rs : which haply found,
 Soon shall our favor'd legions in array
 Of martial splendor toward Exham's tow'rs
 March with more ample strength to meet in fight
 Their savage foes : nor long, we trust, shall fail
 England's great Monarch from that pest to free
 His country, and his high designs atchieve.”

All joyful hear : and at expected sign
 Buoyant commove, and urging swift their way
 Dart far thro' æther, till o'er Albion's isle
 High-hov'ring they arrive, and gradual all

Descend in wavy balance, till at length
 They touch with gentle fall the fleecy clouds
 Which o'er the earth float high on curling wings.
 Sudden the gorgeous train, their motion rein'd,
 Stop, gen'ral, and the chariots resting soft
 Hang pois'd. Behold ! at once their orient seats
 The angels quit, and on their outspread wings
 Joyful sail downward thro' the yielding air,
 To mortal sight invisible, yet they
 Clearly discern th' opposing hosts, and plains
 Spread o'er with thousand tents.

BOOK
 VI.

V. 1226—1255.

Tow'rd these they steer

Their easy course, and soon upon the tops
 Of hills, whose height o'erlook'd the warlike plains
 Of Wereham, with supreme delight express'd,
 Discern on watch their own associate peers,
 Shrin'd in a radiant cloud. These strait they join
 With friendly gratulation, nor less joy
 Surpriz'd the watchful legion to behold
 Now with their chief from heav'nly realms return'd
 So many friends, well known in mutual bliss.
 From which attentive band the new-arriv'd
 Soon hear of welcome tidings to their wish.—
 “ That yet the Christian camp, the destin'd charge,
 Uninjur'd rests from Satan's dark deceits.
 That all the parted leaders are return'd
 With new-assembled pow'rs : that Alfred's skill
 Has form'd to battle all the peasant train :
 That with the morrow the sixth sun will rise,
 In solemn council nam'd, when all the host

Shall march tow'rd Exham's tow'rs in full array
To meet in battle their expecting foes :
Wherefore the time demands that instant all
The heav'nly band throughout the Christian camp
Yield prosperous aid, and fill with active zeal
The warriors' hearts, in preparation met
For their so near departure."—This resolv'd,
Instant the bright celestial train, conjunct,
Move tow'rd the English camp, by mortal eyes
Unseen, where soon arriv'd, all to their charge
Among the busy legions take their way.

BOOK
VI.

V. 1256—1266.

ALFRED.

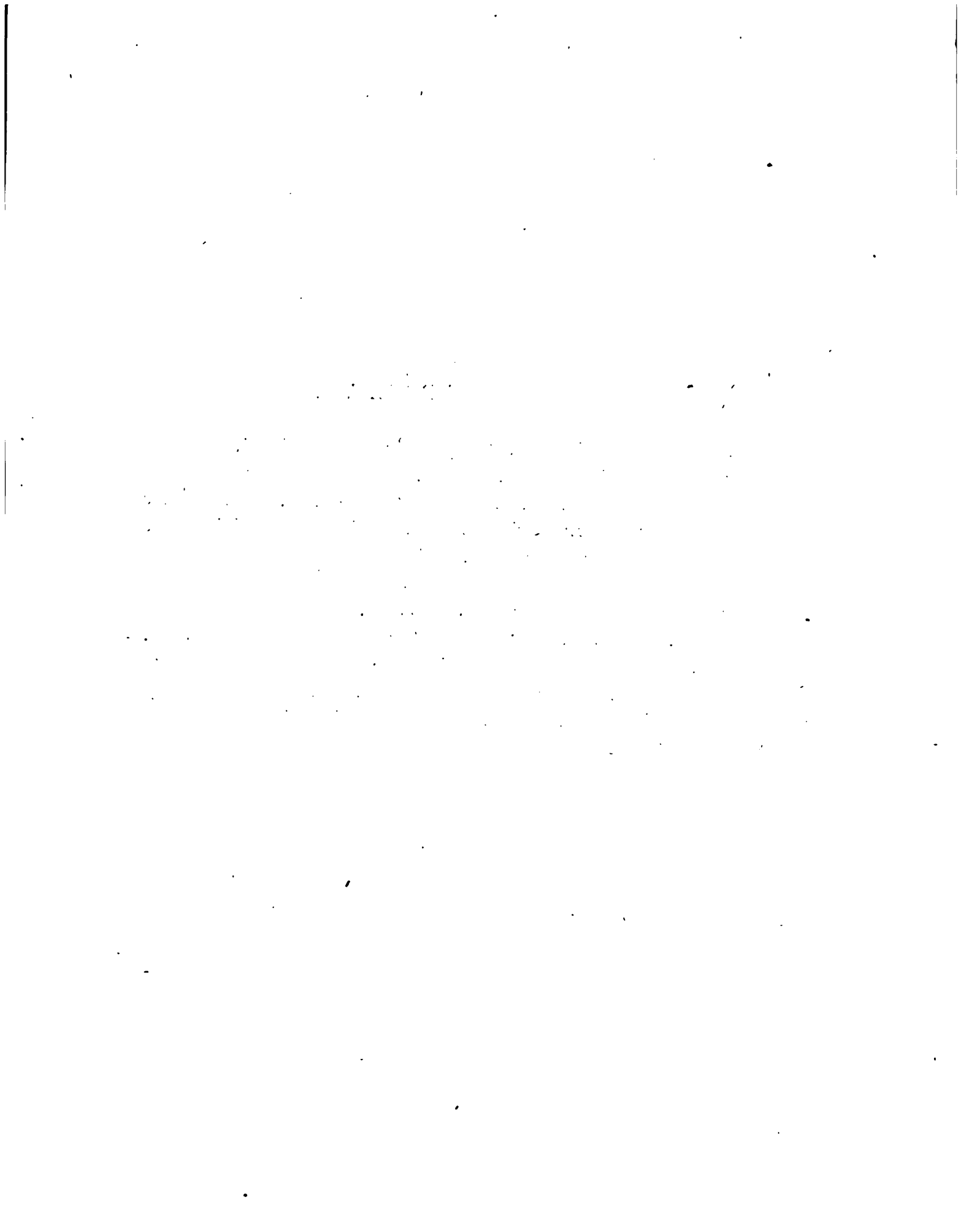
BOOK VII.

1911

1912

ARGUMENT OF BOOK VII.

Evening. The English prepare to depart the following day, in pursuit of the Danes. Feasting in the camp. Night. Departure of the English in the morning. The chiefs described. Alfred addresses the army. March of the English through the southern provinces, ravaged by the Danes on their passage to Exeter. The army rests on its march. The approach of the English army is foretold to Guthrun by a heavenly messenger. He warns his army, part of which goes out to meet the English and attacks them. The English pitch their tents near Exeter. Religious ceremonies observed by the English previous to battle. Alfred sends a flag of truce into the Danish camp, with presents to ransom the English captives. The request is denied by the Danes. The embassy partakes of a Danish feast, and sees the religious rites of the Danish prophetesses. A vision of the Pagan Deities. Both armies prepare for battle.



ALFRED.

BOOK VII.

V. 1—19.

NOW Evening in the west her golden throne
Uplifted, rob'd in purple-varying clouds,
And at her look serene from ev'ry tree
Shot lengthen'd shadows, which to beast and bird
Warn'd soft repose, while calm-descending dews
Refresh'd the earth, till in the bright'ning east
Titania rose.

O'er all the English camp
A scene of preparation fills the view :
Soldiers in flamy armour mix convolv'd
Amid the glimm'ring tents, while thousand spears
Passing along with ever changeful course
Bespeak in multitudinous concourse met
The total bands. Amid the martial crowds
The chiefs pass frequent, and survey the works
On ev'ry hand, whose aspect bore alike
Signs of departure : pond'rous vehicles
Loaded with heavy armour, and the weight
Of tented habitations, roll along,

VOL. I.

P P

While countless steeds, of some approaching stir
 Conscious, amid the mingled agitation, fill
 The vaulted air with their resounding neighs.
 For now from all their provinces diverse
 Return'd, with pow'rful fresh-assembled trains
 Of haughty warriors, the recruited chiefs
 Conjoin their force; and many a new-form'd band
 Of rescued villagers, to deeds of arms
 Train'd by their monarch's skill, aspire for war.
 That all the mighty host, now wait alone
 Tomorrow's dawn, to hail their destin'd march.
 All long to hear their sov'reign's due commands.
 Nor these were wanted long; for now their chief,
 Th' imperial Alfred, with paternal care
 Pass'd, and on ev'ry hand his counsel glad
 Dispens'd, exhorting, and with ardent zeal
 Inspiring all. Tells them their ev'ry hope
 Rests in their proper valour, in their cause
 Sacred and just, and blessing of high heav'n.
 Nor did not proud joy thro' the Monarch's breast
 Exulting swell, as he perceiv'd each heart
 Burn with responsive courage to his wish.

The heralds summon by command the chiefs
 Of ev'ry legion in the monarch's tent
 To meet in high consult. Prompt all obey.
 Here soon the ready sov'reign opes the cause
 Of meeting, to arrange the purpos'd march;
 Nor lingers here dissension, but at once
 Unanimous all fix that with the dawn

~~The~~ total army shall commove, nor stop
~~Their~~ joyful course, till near the banks of Exe
~~Encamping~~ they repose their tents, and fire
 Their hopes with prospect of their foes at hand.
 Here too the venerable Osmund tells
 And Oddune, Devon's valiant duke, that late
 The Frisian seamen, thro' their provinces
 Collected by persuasion and reward,
 Are parted in a num'rous band to fill
 The English fleet, near Wareham's menac'd shores,
 There under Ochter's high command to wait
 The wish'd departure of the Danish ships
 Preparing from Dorsetian coasts to seek
 The spacious ports of Exe. When as enjoin'd
 Ochter will send swift heralds to apprise
 His anxious sov'reign, and if need require,
 Intreat his presence in the ships, to cheer
 The seamen and diffuse his pow'rful aid,
 When on their destin'd voyage they attack
 In naval battle ~~the~~ piratic Danes.
 Nor mid the solemn council were forgot
 Their hapless countrymen, who now perhaps
 Within the Danish camp are doom'd to bear
 Horrors unknown, captives by chance of war.
 Gladly the fix'd resolve is heard around,
 That soon as o'er the plains of Exe shall rise
 Their tented homes, the monarch will depute
 Humane a noble embassy with gifts
 To move the stubborn foe, and ransom all
 The captive train. These fix'd proposals heard,

Book

VII.

~~V. 49—78.~~

And the full council ended, all retire.

The thronging legions o'er their copious feasts
Where all partake repast, in converse high
Raise animating themes, that fire the heart
With prosp'rous expectation, while around
Bards wake the songs of other days, that rouse
To fervent rapture the transported soul.
As when a band of hunters over night
Preparing for the chace of savage beasts
Wait with keen expectation for the hour,
When the sun rising o'er the misty hills
Shall light their shadowy caves, and hear elate
The shrill horn echo thro' the joyous land :
So these th' approach of their intended march
Hail eager, and are cheer'd with harp and song.

Meantime the royal table is prepar'd
For sumptuous revelry, and all the chiefs
Haste thither, as propos'd : whom glad the King
Greets as they enter his capacious tent.
And soon along the spacious board are rang'd
The mailed heroes, venerable priests,
And beauteous females, wives and daughters fair
Of many a chief, in highest honour held.
At one extreme the noble monarch sat,
(On either hand a sacred bard) and pledg'd
The full regale around. The splendid dome
Rings with the notes of joy, and eager hope
Shines on each countenance. The choral bards

Book
VII.

V. 79—106.

Wake solemn harmonies on echoing harps,
 And swell the tide of song, that o'er the soul
 Rolls as some murm'ring river spreads his streams
 Gay-glitt'ring o'er the freshen'd fields. So pass'd
 Cheerful the hours, till in her mid career
 Night thro' the wide pavilion of the sky
 Sail'd calm, and her dark robe o'erspread with gold
 Hung high o'er all the earth, her stately brows
 Crown'd with the crescent moon. While sole were heard
 Along the tranquil air the murm'ring sounds
 Of waves that from the tide-uplifted sea
 Roll'd on th' adjacent shores.

Book
 VII.

V. 107—135.

The chiefs aware

Retire at length all to their proper tents
 Seeking the balm of sleep, resolv'd alike
 With the first blush of dawn to meet in arms
 And join th' array of all th' assembled host,
 Impatient for their promis'd march. With these
 Move their fair wives, whose looks alone inspire
 Each warrior with proud courage, and resolve
 To conquer, or to die in fight, or ere
 The brutal foe attempt dishonour foul
 On their soft charms, or hurt their helpless babes.

Th' imperial Alfred leads his beauteous wife,
 The lov'd Elsweda, and his sister kind
 Burthred's fair widow, tow'rd an inner tent
 There on the peaceful couch to seek repose.
 Ent'ring within its spacious range, they pass
 Its chambers, separate by falling folds

Of silken texture, while fair virgins meet, Book
 The honour'd Queen, daughters of noble chiefs, VII.
 Her willing handmaids, leading her as wont V.1136-1164
 Strait to her own apartment, where her robes
 Of costly frame unloos'd, and soft dispos'd
 Within their ample ward, th' attendant fair
 Fit to her beauteous limbs a slender vest,
 Meeter for calm repose. Meantime the King
 Within his chamber, where extended stood
 His own broad art-deck'd couch, and near dispos'd
 Another bed of lesser frame that held
 His beauteous infants, loos'd his armour off
 Heavy and bright, and his broad shield depos'd
 Helmet and spear, beside the glittering couch:
 Then in soft raiment cloth'd his manly limbs:
 And waited sole his honour'd spouse, who stay'd
 Not long, but his kind sister to her couch
 Conducting first, into his presence came, when both
 As wont, approaching their lov'd offspring's bed
 Tenderly on them gaz'd, and as they slept,
 Saw smiles of peace adorn their rosy cheeks,
 Which soft their parents kiss'd, and to the care
 Commended them of heav'n, to bless their lives,
 And make them good and happy. This perform'd,
 The virtuous pair turn'd from them, and beside
 Their own resplendent couch, as ever wont,
 Knelt humble, and to heav'n their sacred pray'r
 Meek, void of ostentation, thus prefer'd:
 " Father of all, from thy sublime abode

Deign to effuse on us, on all our race
 Thy gifts of good: ever may peace and love
 Flourish o'er all the earth, and may this isle
 Own thy peculiar favor, while her sons
 Emulous still by deeds of virtue strive
 To win thy blessing, and thee first to please:
 Whence good and happy this fair land may rise
 The glory and example of the earth.
 If such be thy high will, may discord end
 And war, and from our country far remove
 Whatever may be evil, till one bond
 Of blissful union ev'ry nation join,
 Ascribing each to thee all pow'r, all praise."

Book
 VII.
 V. 185—198.

This said, in tranquil rest both soon forgot
 The cares of day, when of the good, (o'erlook'd
 Never by heav'n) and of their meek employ
 Observant, Michael, high angelic chief
 Hov'ring aloft with a celestial choir,
 Touch'd with delight to mark th' endearing scene,
 Soon to their couch dispatch'd a winged train
 To cheer their slumbers with auspicious dreams.
 While he above on thoughts of large intent
 Occupied, pass'd o'er all the camp and saw
 Around whate'er might need his fost'ring aid:
 Nor was his radiant band, to execute
 Whate'er their thought propos'd, unskill'd or slow.
 Into the sleeping warriors they instil
 New strength of body with celestial touch:
 And thro' the cells of fancy they inspire

Thro' his with patriot energy and sense
 Of England's sufferings: that each noble heart
 Thrill'd with fresh courage and resolve to end
 Miseries so deep, by glorious victory;
 Before the raptur'd monarch, as he slept,
 A radiant vision rose in dream divine.
 An angel form, resembling in her look
 His own lov'd wife, yet ev'n more heav'nly touch'd
 With all-surpassing beauty, gradual broke
 Thro' fragrant-breathing air, in robes of light
 Set as with stars: her beamy tresses bound
 On her bright head, and rounded with a crown
 Of gems celestial, left reveal'd her neck
 And half-op'd bosom, orient-pure, to view.
 With look inimitably sweet, and smile
 Excelling mortal grace, the heav'nly shape
 Approach'd, and meekly bending kiss'd his lips,
 At which soft touch seem'd his extatic soul
 T' expire, and glide into the form divine.
 She, gently back withdrawn, the monarch's eyes
 Touch'd with ambrosial hand; immediate beam'd
 A golden radiance all around, whose shine
 Unfolded to the tranced sense a band
 Of angel beings, match'd in shape and grace,
 Floating at ease amid the balmy air,
 In ev'ry fair hue vested; in their hands
 They bore resplendent harps and instruments
 Of heav'nly stop, which tenderly attun'd,
 Pour'd a sweet concert on the monarch's ear.

" Honour to England's King, the great, the good !
 All-hail, immortal hero : in each age
 Rever'd, the father of thy country : thine
 Is heav'n's good-will and favor : persevere
 In all thy blest designs : dangers and pain
 Scorn : and in gracious Providence confide.
 To thee thy grateful country still shall owe
 Her glory ; and success shall crown thy toils."—

Book
 VII.

V. 223—251.

Sung this glad benison, the magic air
 Melted in sweet cadence : and behold !
 Waving their graceful hands, the heav'nly train
 Gradual recede from sight. In fervent trance
 The King awakes, his eyes suffus'd in tears ;
 Tears of extatic joy. Recov'ring soon,
 Gently himself he rais'd, and turn'd his eye
 Tow'rd his lov'd spouse, whom by a lamp's soft light
 Hung from the tent's broad dome, he sleeping saw
 In beauty scarce less winning than the shape
 Seen in his dream : which now her look recall'd,
 And in his heart more vivid deep infus'd.
 On her in mute delight awhile he gaz'd
 With fondness inexpressible : then bent
 Press'd on her vermeil cheek a tender kiss
 That woke her with a smile ; and as her eyes
 Beam'd sweet affection, he in extacy
 Leaning with hand across her snowy neck
 Reveal'd to her his vision of delights.
 O'erjoy'd, she heard, and uttering with meek look
 A grateful orison, well-pleas'd inferr'd

VOL. I.

Q q

Prosperous omens and heav'n's fav'ring care.
Thus wan'd the hours of night, till in her turn
Dawn from th' horizon-verge her orient light
Shedding upon the earth, veil'd all the stars
In her grey robe of dews.

Ere the moist sun
O'er the red ocean-waves the first broad curve
Lifted of his resplendent orb, behold!
Throughout th' awaken'd camp the English host
Assembles. Soldiers in bright armour clad
Innumerable move, on various works
Eager employ'd. Their tents they quick depose,
Whence crowding issue forth in pensive trains
Their venerable sires, whose hoary locks
Hung o'er their feeble limbs, and matrons old,
Daughters, and beauteous wives, and helpless babes.
The pond'rous vehicles beneath their load
Of warlike stores, groan as they roll along
In order'd range. While as the morning beams
Ascending tinge with gold the eastern clouds,
Lo! standards numberless unfurl'd broad-wave
O'er all the dewy air their glitt'ring pomp
And martial blazonry, to whose bright sign
Under their mighty chiefs in dense array
Each haughty province moves. Splendid their view
Appears, as when the various bow of heav'n
Strides o'er the shadowy hills, when ev'ning spreads
Gold on their beamy tops, and glitt'ring show'rs
Descend upon the woods in ev'ry hue.

Here noble Oddune mov'd, in burnish'd brass
 All-arm'd, and moving seem'd a tow'r of gold.
 Behind his rolling ensign, awful came
 The venerable Herbert, his grey locks
 And hoary beard wide-streaming on the air,
 As snow involves some lofty mountain's top.
 Aylwin was there, the gallant, and the bold,
 Exulting in his might, his dark-brown face
 Stern-smiling underneath his shady helm;
 Strong as a lion roaming for his prey.
 Rayner advanc'd with solemn pace, whose mien
 Fix'd and sedate, struck on th' arrested heart
 Involuntary awe: his earth-bent looks
 Seem'd brooding tempests, as he gloomy came
 Terrible in aspect, frowning like Jove
 When all-enrag'd he hurls amid the skies
 Impetuous thunders and o'erwhelms the groves.
 The vet'ran Edric there appear'd, his limbs
 O'erhung with lofty plumes and streaming hair
 That from his casque thick-wav'd; behind he look'd,
 Call'd onward his adopted boys, and seem'd
 An eagle when he leads his youthful sons
 First from their lofty nest to dart on earth
 Amid th' astonish'd flocks. Hianfrid came
 Behind, all-glitt'ring, radiant in his arms
 As shines the west at eve. Harold was near,
 Less gaudy, but adorn'd in arms, that shot
 Light'nings where'er he turn'd, and in his voice
 Storms roll'd. The loyal Berthun here advanc'd
 Under his lofty banner, and appear'd

Book
 VII.

V. 281—310

While o'er him shadows from its brilliant folds
 Play'd various, like the moon in golden state
 Piercing her luminous veil. Osmund was there,
 High-favor'd chief, on whose serener brows
 Sat meeken'd resignation, yet with grief
 Solemn and thoughtful blent, as memory
 Ever to his awaken'd fancy brought
 His Athelard lost : yet dreadful valour shone
 Around him, whose sole look might pall the heart
 With pow'rless terror, as he stately mov'd,
 Rapt in himself, with fixed eye, that gleam'd
 Destruction, low'ring like a night of clouds
 Advancing over heav'n, ere from their sides
 Fires flash, and swelling thunders shake the earth.
 Before them all pre-eminent appear'd
 Alfred, imperial sov'reign : at their head
 He shone in radiant arms, emboss'd with gold
 Refulgent as the sun at beamy noon
 Illumining the skies, when all the hills
 Shine, and his glory decks each winding stream.
 Beside the King his flamy standard rose
 Aloft broad-waving, gorgeous-bright, with gold
 And varied gems o'erspread, beaming as stars
 That spangle heav'n's blue concave. On the host
 He gaz'd, admiring, as their steely ranks
 Blaz'd on his view, while spears and lances wav'd
 In order'd splendor o'er their gleamy helms ;
 And steeds, caparison'd in rich array,
 Proud stood, innumerable, wheresoe'er his eye
 Shot its keen glance. All-bright, all-fresh in arms

Book
 VII.

V. 311—340.

They stood, like trees which in the dews of morn
 Sparkling, o'erspread the sides of fertile hills,
 And see below amid the spacious vales
 Their forms reflected in the sunny lakes.
 High-seated on his foaming steed, that pranc'd
 Beneath his nodding plumes, pawing the earth
 Under rich mantlings, glad the monarch pass'd
 From rank to rank, and view'd their full array :
 While in his looks beneficence and love
 Shone, temper'd with intrepid valour. Soon
 Checking his proud career, the sov'reign stopt
 In the mid-van, and thus the host address'd.

Book
 VII.

V. 341—369.

“ Now, Britons, countrymen, the joyful day
 Hails us, when arm'd afresh with stronger pow'rs
 We march to battle, and in fields of fame
 Meet our fell foes, the sons of murder, spoil,
 Slav'ry, and endless death. Who now will turn
 Traitor to England's cause, himself, and heav'n ?
 Fly the base villain—But no trembling wretch
 Pollutes your noble ranks—Ye, noble souls,
 Brave sons of Britain, in the gory fight
 Prepar'd to die, or conquer, now come on,
 Follow your King—who asks no other name,
 Than brother, fellow-soldier, in the cause
 Of England, freedom, laws, and life, and heav'n.
 Children, wives, aged sires, for you we fight,
 To save from massacre, and rape, and chains,
 You and your race—your trembling limbs from wounds—
 Your homes from fires. In your defence, new strength

Nerves all our frames. Soon on th' astonish'd foe
 Descending like a tempest we will rush
 With pow'r unconquerable. Ev'ry arm
 Shall smite their shatter'd legions; ev'ry blow
 Prostrate a savage ruffian; nor one fear
 Possess one English heart. Heav'n on our side,
 Ready with aid, to ev'ry soul shall bring
 New courage, force untir'd to ev'ry arm.
 Oh! ere the blushing sun behold our ranks
 Fly backward, struck with terror, may the earth
 Swallow us undisgrac'd, or may the blood
 Pouring from ev'ry vein, the field of death
 Imbrue with crimson-smoking floods to veil
 With one red mantle all the heaps of slain.
 No! while one rank can lift the reeking sword,
 We rush to death, or glorious victory."

Book
 VII.

V. 370—398.

So saying, he led on with signal wont
 Th' impatient army, who advanc'd along
 With shouts resounding thro' the vault of heav'n,
 As at the mouth of some capacious gulph
 The torrents rushing from alarmed hills
 Roar o'er opposing rocks, and to the sea
 Tumultuous roll, when far and wide the land
 Totters, and ocean many a league resounds.
 Onward the legions move, in multitudes
 Numberless as the pilgrim bands that take
 Their eager journey toward Mecca's fanes
 To memorize their prophet, when her sons
 Arabia yields profus'd; and Persia sends

Her thronging nations from her wide domains
 To meet from burning Afric's southern climes
 The sable strangers of a distant world.

Book
 VII.

V. 399—437.

Behind their proud career in deep array
 The train of beauteous females come, the limbs
 Of tott'ring age; th' unconscious bud of youth;
 Borne all on trains immense of vehicles,
 Rolling with solemn noise: a barrier vast
 To guard the final rear. Thro' countries wide
 O'er hill, and vale, and champain broad, they pass,
 And mark alone the dismal vestiges
 Of their rapacious foe, cruel as death.
 Where'er the eye may turn, sole strike the view
 Villages flaming; happy rural homes
 Ras'd to the ground; dark forests on the sight
 Stretching their ghastly shapes, a naked range
 Of blacken'd trunks, devour'd by fires: the fields
 A desolated waste, unpeopled, bare,
 Where solitary Ruin reigns, or holds
 Orgies with grim confusion: stately towns
 Pillag'd and sack'd, o'er whose high-tow'ring spires
 And castled heights, huge smoking volumes roll
 Horrible clouds, that speak below a scene
 Of fiery devastation: solemn fanes
 Homes of religion's peaceful ministers,
 Unroof'd and open to the common air,
 Reft of their habitants; and all around
 Dire marks of savage murder pall the heart.
 Leagued here with Horror, frightful Rapine stalks

In vest imbrued with blood, o'er ev'ry plain.
 Thus on their rapid course they pass along,
 Both while the climbing sun with aspect red
 Gleaming thro' smoky darkness, to his throne
 Meridian rose; and while his falling track
 Inclined the world to rest, and o'er the skies
 Fair-spread the pensive, soothing tints of eve.

BOOK
 VII.
 V. 428—456.

Now twilight o'er the earth her dewy veil
 Hung modest, when successively reveal'd
 From their ærial mansions graceful walk'd
 The earliest stars, that to rest-seeking men,
 Fair heralds, tell th' approaching steps of night.
 But not the shine of ev'ning stars might pierce,
 Constant, the mournful gloom of smould'ring clouds
 Pregnant with fate, which from the wasted face
 Of England's southern provinces arose.
 Nor could their radiant beams efface the glare
 Of streaming fires, whose dimly-fading light
 From many a spot amid the troubled air
 Flash'd frequent: while the heart-struck English host
 Preparing for the night to court repose,
 Beneath the shelt'ring covert of tall hills.
 Within the bosom of a vale, their speed
 Delay, and under their soon-fitted tents
 Seek rest.—Others within the neighb'ring cots
 Of a sequester'd vill wait tardy sleep
 Which flies their anxious thoughts. Thus while the host
 Rest troubled, were th' immortal sons of light
 Bright-hov'ring o'er them. Active and awake

These to new softness with mysterious hand
 Temper the elements and air of night,
 And guard their silent legions from approach
 Of obscure dangers, till the rosy morn,
 Peering thro' clouds of gold, o'er hill and vale,
 Diffus'd with fragrant hand refreshing light.
 Scarce were the first bright streaks of orient beams
 Shot from dawn's purple eye, reflected soft
 On the hill tops, ere from their ductile homes
 Innumerable issuing, all th' impatient host
 Assembles, eager to renew their march.
 Nor long delay prevents, but in array
 Total dispos'd, their re-commencing march
 Commoves, and ardent they impel along
 Their glad, unwearied legions; till at length
 From the broad summit of a lofty hill,
 Whence wide in prospect lay the country round,
 With bursting joy th' expectant host discerns
 The distant waters of fair-winding Exe,
 First seen.

Immediate from the total ranks
 Rose a loud shout exultant, that afar
 O'er the wide, subject country echoing roll'd,
 Borne on the burden'd gales. With swifter haste,
 More eager, on they rush, inflam'd with hope
 Soon to descry the wide-surrounding camp
 Of their fierce foe. As when a thronging herd
 Of hungry lions in the sultry wilds
 Of Afric, stun the air with thund'ring roars
 That all the country trembles, as they pour

VOL. I.

R F

 BOOK
 VII.

 V. 457—486.

Infuriate o'er the barren wastes, in view
 Of some low village, fill'd with hoarded prey;
 So rush'd with dreadful noise the English host.
 While as their rapid torrent spreads along,
 From far high-hov'ring o'er the Danish camp
 (Ere yet the English troops its skirts discern
 Gleaming aloft by Exham's wave-wash'd tow'rs)
 The Demon pow'rs alarm'd the coming host
 Watchful observe, o'er which in squadron bright
 Moving, as with augmented pow'rs, they see,
 Surpriz'd, a splendid band of heav'nly forms,
 Novel in view. Nor was th' infernal throng
 Unconscious then, that in the sacred cause
 Of England, menac'd by their dreadful arts,
 Heav'n had dispatch'd new trains, while earth had join'd
 Ardent, recruited legions to assist
 Th' unwearied efforts of the patriot King.

Book

VII

V. 487—515.

Instant the host malignant swift-descend
 Amid the vacant Danes, who thro' their camp
 Rioting in continuous feasts, the gift
 Of emulous chieftains, prodigal of spoil,
 Pass the glad day in revelry and song,
 Or drown their surfeit in oblivious sleep,
 Relax'd from toils of war. These soon the host,
 Invisible, by ominous signs of fate
 Or awful phantoms of portentous view,
 O'er all th' extended camp the hope of war
 Renewing, from lethargic ease awake
 To thoughts of mightiest fury. In his tent,

Where thoughtful, and alone, for some proud feast
 Guthrun, the sov'reign chief, prepar'd, while oft
 High, martial cares absorb'd his brooding soul;
 Lo! radiant-vested, to his startled view
 A female form appear'd, of heav'nly port,
 Taller than human, beaming fair, as shines
 The moon, when wide she gilds the dewy earth.
 High in her hand she bore a dazzling'spear:
 She stood, and on him her majestic brows
 Bending, that as he gaz'd, a look more mild
 Assum'd, with silv'ry voice thus broke the air.

Book
 VII.

V. 516—543.

“ Why, chief of men, thus o'er th' enervate camp
 Swell the rife notes of feasts and revelry,
 While to your guardless confines proud approach
 Innumerable hosts of warriors, fierce as wolves,
 Breathing destruction?—Know ye not my name?
 I from Valhalla's glitt'ring mansions come,
 Gna, honour'd messenger of heav'n's high King
 Odin, Almighty Father, God of war.
 He sends me down to rouse your sleeping rage.
 Your cause he favors: hence this anxious care.
 Haste, arm for battle, ere th' impetuous foe
 O'erwhelm you, and atchieve glories undue,
 And yielded only by supine repose.”

Severe she spake, and turning, her broad wings
 Unfolded, sparkling rich with orient gold,
 Which, as she sail'd along th' illumin'd tent,
 Wav'd fragrance, till amid the sounding air

Upborne, she pass'd from sight. O'eraw'd, the King **Book**
 Stood silent a brief space, absorb'd in thought, **VII.**
 Till such high embassy revolv'd, at once V. 544—572.
 Amid his thoughtless host th' astonish'd chief
 Passes: to all with awful voice proclaims
 Th' intelligence divine, and signal will
 Vouchsaf'd of heav'n's great King. Amaz'd they hear,
 And ceasing instant their mad revels, seize
 Their arms, and for expected war prepare,
 All thoughts of indolence dispell'd, and sole
 Insatiate fury burning ev'ry breast.
 Throughout the camp the busy legions move,
 Strength'ning the works, and for the gen'ral fight
 Madd'ning exhort each other, soon as ere
 Th' advancing foe (so wills the sovereign chief)
 Shall meet in full array. Not thus restrain'd,
 The proud chief Amund, with impatient zeal
 Glowing, the kingly leader bold accosts.

“ Let not me here thus wait, but instant give
 To eager glory the high meed she claims.
 Before the gen'ral fight, I with a band
 Select, will meet the foe, and daring wrest
 From his first van hazardous deeds of fame,
 And nobler, bold exploits, that shall inflame
 Our host to fury, while they see us win
 Earnest of future vict'ries, and the war
 Gallant commencing, merit feasts and joys
 Yet future, and record our names in song.”

So saying, without resistance he collects

A chosen train, to whom his voice inspires
 Courage, and bids their fiery band disdain
 Numbers unmatch'd, but from the first approach
 Of the near foe win trophies of renown.
 Their pond'rous battle axes swift they seize.
 And their huge limbs in skins of savage beasts
 Involve: then grimly-fierce they issue forth,
 As when a troop of 'Tartars thro' wild woods,
 Cloth'd in the skins of wolves, their perilous way
 Urge in the chase of costly furs, and brave
 Fearless the piercing cold, or fell attack
 Of roaming tygers. O'er their heads advance,
 Exulting, an infernal band, and add
 Signs of success. Resound their hideous shouts
 That Exham's tow'rs re-echo, and the waves
 Of rolling Exe, as tow'rd th' apparent host
 Of English on they rush, now first beheld
 Descending o'er a sloping hill amid
 The narrow pass of a contiguous vale.
 Whence first their joyful host with equal noise
 Hail the near tow'rs of Exham, and the sight
 Of the wide Pagan camp. Onward the band
 Of Amund rolls intrepid, as the waves
 Of some broad surge assail a rocky isle,
 Driv'n by a storm. Obvious they soon approach
 The bright array of their impetuous van,
 Whose watchful leaders with surprize discern
 So weak a force against their total host
 Rashly oppos'd. Delay is none. At once
 Rages the furious conflict. Clash broad shields

Book
 VII.

V. 573—602.

To shields oppos'd, and flamy falchions blaze
 Light'nings around, as wielded vast they roar
 On shatter'd arms. Huge battle-axes groan,
 Riving the shiver'd mail, and crashing bones.
 Dire was the war, as with resistless force
 And noise of eager fury and alarm
 The English host came on, band after band,
 As when the clouds, blown by the swelling winds
 Roll in dark heaps along the vaulted sky,
 Flashing destructive fires. They overwhelm the foe,
 As some dread whirlpool in unfathom'd seas
 With roar of loudest cataracts absorbs
 Within its stormy vortex hapless ships
 Or roaming whales, which of approaching death
 Aware, confound the sea with dismal groans.
 Loud was the rage, the roar, as when a storm
 Pours o'er the darken'd vales, when Winter bares
 The ravag'd hills, and from each shelter'd cot
 Tears the low roof, as with infuriate arm
 He hurls his tempests forth, impetuous, wild,
 Thundering thro' naked woods, and icy caves.
 The shatter'd Danes before their torrent course
 Or fly dispers'd, or underneath the feet
 Of trampling steeds or warriors, hideous death
 Unsorrowing meet: nor total quell'd, for lo!
 Retiring by circuitous paths, again
 The fierce remains of their unconquer'd band,
 Unterrified, the last advancing rear
 Furious assail, where o'er the loaded cars
 Guarded, the miserable females sat.

Book
 VII.

V. 602—631.

And here a victim to infuriate rage
 And the relentless sword, certain had fall'n
 The monarch's honour'd sister, unretriev'd,
 Had not a gallant soldier at the cost
 Of his own life her precious ransom paid,
 Warding the dreadful onset, singly bold,
 Till thitherward by chance Hianfrid led
 His band alarm'd, at whose o'ernumber'd view
 The satiate Danes retir'd, seeking their camp
 With what of their diminish'd force remain'd,
 By paths circuitous. The female train,
 And chief the monarch's sister, grateful deem
 Hianfrid their deliv'rer, tho' no deed
 Of worthy valour signaliz'd his arm:
 Praise cheaply won, the lot of happy chance.

Book
 VII-

V. 632--660.

And now the English host advancing wide
 Spreads o'er the champaign, whence in prospect fall
 They view the Danish camp, with glitt'ring arms
 Throng'd and conspicuous tents: not distant far
 O'er Exham's subject tow'rs. Soon o'er the side
 Of a broad sheltring hill above the waves
 Of the deep-rolling Exe the prudent King
 Selects the destin'd station, where his camp
 Safest and best may hold his armed pow'rs:
 Which chos'n, immediate o'er th' appointed place
 Successive pours the whole delighted host,
 In broad array, bright-glist'ning to the view,
 As a thick tempest of continuous snow
 Drives thro' the air oblique, when rising winds

Drift the deep mantle o'er the swelling hills,
 Forests, and caves, and plains, and loaded vales,
 In undistinguish'd deluge which o'erspreads
 In one vast sheet the whole white-glimm'ring land.
 Here soon th' impatient army glad dispose
 Their stately tents, and round their spacious camp
 Dig the wont trench, near whose deep shelving banks
 A lofty mound arose; a bulwark vast.
 Strong gates at intervals of distance due
 Dispart the pond'rous fence, and to the camp
 Lead diff'rent ways. These works complete, in view
 Of their opposing foes the English host
 Ponder new wars, and from their late repulse
 Draw prosp'rous omens. All around the King
 Surveys their labours, and with cheering voice
 Instructs, or aids, their zeal. Reflecting then,
 That human toils, or human skill, alone
 Command not hop'd success, if heav'n averse,
 Unask'd, deny its blessing and its aid,
 The meekly pious King his strict command
 Issues that all the full-assembled host
 Meet on th' adjacent plain, and there to heav'n
 Humbly unite in solemn pray'rs, to ask
 Its pow'rful blessing on their ready arms.

Book
 VII.

V. 669—690.

Rev'rent all hear: immediate thro' the camp
 Dispos'd in wide array decorous moves
 The vast procession. Borne aloft in air
 Wav'd first the princely ensigns, whose bright pomp
 Display'd the holy cross, and in each heart

Struck pious veneration. Follow'd next
 In sacred train, bishops rever'd and priests
 Devote to Christ and his celestial faith.
 After whose steps, the bards in honour'd band
 Mov'd decent, sweetly hymning as they went
 Melodious strains, breathing of peace and heav'n.
 Next came the sov'reign King, majestic, tall,
 His brows unhelm'd, and o'er his radiant mail
 His dark locks waving, as with look compos'd
 Graceful he mov'd. Beside his solemn steps
 Fair-beaming, mild, with ev'ry charm adorn'd,
 Appear'd his blameless wife, in either hand
 Leading a blooming infant. Nor apart
 His sister mov'd, grateful for life preserv'd.
 Them following, in succession long advanc'd
 The ducal chiefs, and thanes, and leaders prime
 Of all the valiant host, with whom appear'd
 In order due arrang'd their beauteous wives,
 And babes, the train of youths, the hoary sires,
 Whose sole aspect might claim heav'n's fav'ring eye.
 Last in due order came th' innum'rous host
 Of gallant soldiers, valour in their looks,
 England's last hope. Arriv'd the plain, ere long
 On a rais'd altar, from afar beheld,
 The venerable Asser meek ascends,
 And kneels devout; whose high example soon
 The total host obeys, and o'er the plain
 Bending in solemn adoration, all
 Expect his hallow'd pray'r. Nor paus'd delay.
 A reverential silence reigns around.

Book
 VII.

V. 691—720.

While high above the pleas'd angelic choir
 Survey th' affecting scene, and thoughtful mark
 The proffer'd orisons. With heav'n-rai'd eye
 The pious priest his moving pray'r address'd.

Book
 VII.

V. 721—749.

“ Almighty King of heav'n and earth, prime source
 And end of all things good, at whose command
 The heav'nly spheres in beauteous harmony
 Continual roll, the sun dispenses day,
 The moon her station knows, and at whose word
 Each earthly kingdom prospers or decays,
 Oh! hear the creatures of thy hand, and bless,
 If right we ask, the purpose we intend.
 Oh! yield not this fair isle to foreign foes,
 Frantic invaders, fierce, denying thee,
 War-breathing pagans. Give not our dear homes
 To desolating fires, our wives, our babes,
 Victims to slaughter, and the merciless sword.
 See not thine altars trampled, and in place
 Of equal laws, and virtuous industry,
 Murder, and famine, and idolatry,
 Stalk o'er the blood-drench'd land. Be thou our shield;
 Assert our cause; the cause of right, and heav'n.
 Under the banners of thy servant King,
 Our honour'd leader, guide our armies on
 To vict'ry, and from ev'ry ill defend.
 Long may he live his great and good designs
 Full to accomplish; thro' this favor'd isle
 To stablish peace and happiness; to found
 Just, equal laws: to strengthen and extend

Her commerce; to promulgate useful arts;
 And on eternal base thine altars raise.
 Whence under his mild reign Britannia's sons,
 Thy favor'd people, mindful of their good,
 May live industrious, social, quiet, blest,
 The glory and example of the world,
 And to their sons transmitting with firm zeal
 Blessings like these, may die at last in peace.
 Not unprepar'd, but longing with fix'd hope,
 For that superior life of bliss in heav'n,
 Promis'd to all the good: in sight of thee,
 And highest, happiest beings, till all time
 Sink on the bosom of Eternity."

Book
 VII.

V. 750—778.

He ceas'd: th' attentive heav'nly choir on high
 Waft the meek ardor to the throne supreme,
 Angelic incense burning on its wings.
 And now along the field responsive hymns
 Rise, graceful: voices sweet their charming tones
 Pour smooth: the harp her mingling work, and flute,
 Delicious-breathing, cease not: hollow trump
 Or sounding clarion, big with notes of war,
 None threat'ning roar, to interrupt the rites
 Of meek religion, uttering strains of peace.
 Heav'n heard applausive; and each throbbing heart
 Was cheer'd with conscious hope.

Now all the air
 Breathing of eve, a soft refreshment shed
 O'er the dew'd fields; the closing flow'rs distill'd
 A richer fragrance, ere extended shades

Hid all their beauties, and on ev'ry bough
 Birds warbled music to the sinking sun.
 In ready order to the tented camp
 Returns the total host. Nor intervenes
 Delay, ere as propos'd, humane the King
 Sends a prompt mission to the hostile camp,
 By gifts of costly price from captive chains
 To ransom those brave men, thro' cruel chance
 Of battle lost amid the last dire field.
 Instant with eager joy from princely tents
 Are brought the precious gifts: proud mettled steeds,
 Rich armour, polish'd mail, and high-plum'd helms,
 Goblets, profuse of gold; vases of glass,
 Rare, and of costly frame: huge, glitt'ring swords,
 And shields, with many a proud device adorn'd.
 To noble Osmund and the trusty chief,
 Rayner, the wary sov'reign now commits
 Th' important embassy. They in their hands
 Bear the white flag of truce, and of their steps
 Associate, take two venerable bards
 Deck'd with the flowing mantle and the harp,
 Ensigns of sacred name, by fiercest tribes
 Respected, honouring the pow'r of song.
 Attendants bring the gifts in splendid train.
 While o'er the spacious champain, from afar
 Conspicuous, they proceed, and cross the vale,
 And rising heights, till now their steps arrive
 The outer confines of the Pagan camp.

Which entering, soon amid the thronging Danes,

All eager to survey their train, they pass
 And tow'rd the royal tent of Guthrun move
 In solemn silence, by a waiting troop
 Escorted. On their way aware they mark
 Dire preparations for fierce war: of arms
 Store unconceiv'd, and spoil: and view surpriz'd
 Huge massive altars to the fancied Gods
 In honour high up-rear'd. Assail their ears
 On ev'ry hand, shouts, and resounding cries,
 The yells of fury, while in bands the foe
 Swear by their mighty swords, and glitt'ring mail,
 Inscrib'd with magic verse, or their tall ships
 Or fury-breathing steeds, never to yield,
 But dying, strike immedicable wounds.
 Then to observe these horrid vows invoke
 Odin, thrice terrible, father of death,
 God in his hand who bears slaughter and fire,
 The chuser of the slain, and stern they swear
 To die all sword in hand, not to outlive
 Their leaders, but to face thrice equall'd foes.
 The Danish chieftains, loud-exulting, part
 The spoils of ravag'd England, as tho' now
 Total attain'd. Priests of the various Gods
 Loud boast by pow'rful arts to raise in air
 Storms, or by magic charm out of their graves
 To call the slumb'ring dead, and hear from them
 The will of fate; to palsy by a word
 The warrior's lifted arm, or instant heal
 Wounds and disease. So amid noise confus'd
 And hideous murmurs thro' the deep-rang'd tents

Book
 VII.

V. 808—837.

Proceeds the anxious embassy, till now
Near the wide precincts of the sov'reign's tent
Their steps arrive.

Book
VII.

V. 868—897.

Here scatter'd round appear
The marks of recent sacrifice. The ground
Near a broad altar, crimson'd o'er with blood,
Confus'd was strown with arms, and mangled flesh,
Dreadful to view. Beside the leader's tent
Resplendent banners wav'd, ensigns of state.
Approaching these, and to the sov'reign chief
Announc'd, the thoughtful train expect his will,
When on the earth bending his pensive looks,
Sudden the venerable Osmund starts
Backward, all-pale, aghast, and stands appall'd,
Fix'd as a statue. Lo! before his gaze
Lie the known armour, shield, and crested helm
Of his dear son, defil'd with gore, and hewn
With hideous dints. Amazement seiz'd the band
Attendant near, who recognize alike
The arms of gallant Athelard, oft seen
Moving thro' hostile ranks in fiercest war.
Dismay on ev'ry count'nance sat, that ting'd
Each cheek with pale. Doubts and dark-boding thoughts
In ev'ry breast arise; various, yet all
Ominous of danger, and unutter'd death.
Dismal suspense and terror full-usurp'd
Osmund's kind heart, that ev'ry sense awhile
Absorb'd, till from his stupefactive trance
Recov'ring, silent o'er the neck he hung
Of his near friend, the virtuous Rayner. He

Uttering sweet words of comfort, soft infus'd
The balm of patient hope.

Thus occupied,
To them a herald comes, who bids their train
Enter the splendid tent, where seated high
Amid his armed chiefs they see with awe
The sov'reign Guthrun. Blood-stain'd arms around
Frequent were hung, with skulls of warriors slain
In fight, now chang'd to decorated cups
Capacious of bright mead, that 'mid the glare
Of pendent lights shone dismal. In array
Before his presence rang'd, the English band
Display their offer'd gifts, and tho' alarm
At that dread vision, fancied still in view,
Perturb'd each feeling heart, their mission soon
The prudent Rayner opes, with meek act
Soliciting release of those brave men,
Captives by chance of war. Their meek request
Guthrun, attentive, seems to yield, whose voice
Thus heard express'd, imperious Oskital,
Stern-menacing, objects, and calls profane
Release so granted, when the captive band
Should be reserv'd for sacrifice, to please
Expectant Gods; and ere their mangled flesh
Smoke on the altar, each in single fight
Should fall by some bold chief, whence to infer
Sure auguries. His words a train of priests
Thronging around confirm: nor tho' allur'd
At sight of so rich treasure, does the chief
Oskital, fonder still of blood, allow

Book
VII.

V. 838—867.

Their wish'd release. The fierce resolve prevails :
 Rejected are the splendid gifts ; nor hope
 Left ever to redeem the captive band.

Book
 VII.

V. 898—926.

This heard with grief, the English chiefs implore
 Sight of the hapless men, or ev'n to hear
 What warriors eminent this mournful lot
 Endure. But ev'n this sad request receives
 Denial strange. Sole to partake the feast
 Ready at hand, the sadden'd embassy
 Finds earnest invitation, nor avails
 Excuse. The splendid feast is now prepar'd.
 Th' assembled chiefs around the spacious board
 In order sit, whose meeting to partake
 Kelwulf, sad chief, invited comes. Surprise
 And mingled awe gleam'd in his pensive looks,
 As entering he beholds his once-lov'd friend,
 Rayner, with noble Osmund. Yet to vent
 Th' emotions of his soul, the warrior chief
 Not dares : for mournful silence check'd his tongue.
 Proceeds the full repast. The flesh of deer,
 Oxen, and boars, the sumptuous table fills.
 In polish'd skulls attendant virgins hand
 Delicious mead, metheglin's luscious juice,
 And costly wine, while many a flowing cup
 The sov'reign Guthrun, rev'rently erect,
 Quaffs to the name of Odin, heav'ns high King,
 Invoking vict'ry and continual war :
 To Thor, all-potent ruler of the air,
 Honour is giv'n in plenteous bowls, to win

His favor, seasons fair and genial skies.
 To Frea, Queen of heav'n, the num'rous board
 Pour the full cup and from her active care,
 Mistress of half the slain, mother of grace,
 Ask prosp'rous aid in battles and in love.
 Mighty Niord, King of the boundless deep,
 Copious libation honours, and his name.
 Sounds frequent. Seated near the royal chief,
 High-honour'd bards the magic pow'r of song
 Roll thro' the sounding dome, while harps attun'd
 Pour full their dulcet harmony. Joy shines
 In ev'ry face, save in the pensive looks
 Of the forc'd visitants, on whom his gaze
 Kenwulph, pale, mournful fix'd, and silent told
 Feelings within him of devout regard,
 Mingled with secret pain.

Him unremark'd,
 Or sole with scarce-check'd insult and contempt
 View'd by the haughty Danes, their sov'reign King
 Forewarns approaching battle, and reminds
 Th' expectant guests that with the custom'd hour
 Holy religious rites to fav'ring Gods
 Must strait be done: Which signal to depart,
 Lest with their presence they profane the scene,
 The wary embassy attend. They rise,
 Willing dismiss'd. Them to the camp's extreme
 Kenwulph indulging earnest, strong desire,
 Follows at humble distance, seen of all:
 Hangs on their tardy steps, and courts their view.
 He longs th' emotions of his swelling heart

Book
 VII.

V. 927—956.

Into the bosom of his once-lov'd friend
 Secret to pour. Nor less desire impels
 The good and feeling Rayner to receive
 The near address of his late-honour'd friend,
 Struck by his mien, nor of his hapless state
 Unconscious. But severer eyes around
 Forbade their nearer interview.

BOOK
 VII.

V. 957—985.

Thus pass'd
 The fruitless embassy. While now arous'd
 For solemn rites th' expectant Danes prepare.
 In vast array the crowding legions move
 Around the destin'd place; on whose proud height
 The magic reafen, tall-uprear'd, gleam'd wide
 Amid the glare of lamps. The total host
 Dispos'd at length in order'd range, to these
 Gorgeous-array'd in robes of purest white
 Came forth the holy prophetesses, sprung
 Of mighty Kings, and honour'd as divine.
 Solemn attention reigns. The sacred train
 Fix on the awful sign their lifted gaze,
 And thus deliver their enraptur'd mind.

“Peace, ev'ry murmur; ev'ry breath be still;
 While heaven's inspired ministers reveal
 The future destinies. To us alone
 Odin, almighty father, gives to know
 The action of all Spirits that animate
 Nature thro' all her works. Who, when the winds
 Or mountain-caverns roar, or waters lift
 Their dark resounding waves, or when the moon

Veils in thick clouds her orb, or when the stars
 Enter within their caves, who, then explains
 The various will of the controlling spirits
 But we alone? How would the battles fail,
 The hero's enterprize, his eager voyage,
 Were not the will of fate, by us reveal'd!
 But heav'n benign, to us vouchsafes t' impart
 Plainly all operations of the Fates,
 Who, Present, Past, and Future, underneath
 The ash that overshadows all the worlds
 Sit, weaving ev'ry destiny of man.
 The Gods forsake us never, but converse
 With us in sleep, or oft in waking trance
 Fix our enraptur'd vision on dread scenes
 Of dim futurity. To us the pow'r
 Belongs by mystic verse out of their graves
 To call the slumb'ring dead, whose soul forsakes
 Valhalla, or the world of Death, to raise
 From its dark home her once companion-frame,
 Prompt to disclose each hero's fated doom.
 Great God of battles; Mother-Queen of heav'n,
 To ye we owe these gifts divine: receive
 Our praise devout. Lo! as we speak, and lift
 Heav'nward our eyes, amazing visions rise
 On our transported sight—We see;—we see;—
 Are these your sacred destinies?—Behold!—
 The world recedes from our extatic sense.—
 Terrific scenes! visions of other times!
 All-hail!—Lo! there victorious standards roll
 Mid glittering clouds of steely heroes, driv'n

Book
 VII.

V. 986—1015

Routed along in swift pursuit.—They fly!—
 The English fly.—The red-cross banners fall,
 Trampled, defil'd with gore.—Fields swim in blood.—
 Carcasses strew the plains.—The vultures scream,
 Flying around, and hungry wolves from far
 Pour roaring to the feast of death.—There sails
 Odin, the terrible, the whirlwind, borne
 In his swift-whirling chariot, as the sun
 Brilliant, and vast; all-gold its rapid wheels:—
 The eyes, the nostrils of his glaring tygers
 Flame light'nings, as they rush along the field,
 Where thousands blasted fall.—The clash of arms
 Stuns the pierc'd ear.—See! how the Valkyries
 Dart ev'ry way, borne on celestial steeds,
 Swifter than arrows. Lo! they lift away
 Thousands of fallen heroes. Odin fills
 His glorious car. Freia, bright goddess, fair
 Ev'n as the moon, hastes yonder towards heav'n,
 Known by her beamy car. Half of the slain
 Already she has chos'n. Gna sails behind,
 Bright on her airy courser. Shakes the bridge
 Of heav'n, as o'er its strong foundations pass
 Th' illustrious train of Gods, chariots, and steeds,
 And mailed heroes, entering brilliant realms
 Of bliss, where Valhall lifts her palaces.
 Vict'ry still loves the Danes. Thousands of foes
 Sink to th' abode of Hela. Wolves devour
 Their mangled shapes around.—Behind appear
 Cities in fiery ruins. Volumes roll
 Of lurid smoke, and fill the vaulted skies.—

Book
 VII.

V. 1016—1045

Gods! what vast scenes of glory rise around!— Book
 Lo! all the Danes throughout the conquer'd land VII.
 Reign, masters. See the crouching, trembling slaves v. 1046—1074
 Suppliant for life, for food; their boasted peace,
 Their servile laws, their humble, toilsome arts
 Extirpate and forgot. Where glitter now
 The temples of their vain religion? All
 Ras'd and extinct, while in its place the faith
 And adoration of our nobler Gods
 Prevail o'er all the land. War, slaughter, death,
 Stablish'd for ever. Sent by Odin down
 From heav'n, eternal Vict'ry smiling hangs
 O'er the tall banners of the lordly Danes.
 We see no change beyond. Till time's last end
 The prospect reaches. Oh! entrancing scenes!
 Stay: ever let us view ye: but ev'n now
 Receding, heav'n its dark'ning curtain draws
 Before our gaze.—The splendors now depart.—
 Oh! fellows, warriors, from our tranced lips
 Heard you express'd heav'n's future destinies?—
 Treasure the sacred truths: be firm, be fierce;
 And let your bravery consummate all.

These words the ambient people meek receive
 With deepest awe, and on the holy train
 Gaze, who exhausted and aghast appear
 As from a trance recov'ring. Eager joy
 Succeeds, and ardor for th' approaching fight.
 With mingling cries the legions call their Gods
 To hear their pray'rs: to yield them aid: to hurl

**Book
VII.**

O'er every legion fall in glorious death,
 Till Victory shout amid the gory field,
 Shall mark their path to battle, nor return
 Their banners streaming o'er each ardent troop
 All eager now demand that with the dawn
 Deepest night, and wake indignant rage,
 The lightning sorrow in each bosom wrought
 Known by his narrow fount strict and defiled,
 O' Allah! I bend, or rather, they rejoice,
 To see the sun of truth and courage,
 O'er the rising glory, and to the expecting throne

ALFRED.

BOOK VIII.

VOL. I.

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ARGUMENT OF BOOK VIII.

Morning. Meeting of the armies. A single combat of two of the chiefs. General battle of the English and Danes. Exploits of various heroes. The English are victorious, but their pursuit of the enemy is prevented by a storm excited by the Demons, who appear in the shapes and ensigns of the Danish Gods. The angels counteract in some degree their delusive agency. Osmund discovers his son. Return of the English to their camp, and festivities there. Alfred determines to ask a truce for burying the dead. Transactions of the Danes. Observing the effect of their illusion, the Demons resolve to display to Guthrun on some future occasion a more full vision of the Pagan beliefs. Night.

ALFRED.

BOOK VIII.

V. 1—19

SCARCE had the morning star his earliest beams
Shot o'er the dawning east, ere from their tents,
O'er all the camp the English legions mov'd,
Vig'rous, and cheer'd with happiest presages.
Amid the throng the chieftains pass, and range
Their warriors for prompt march.

The royal chief

Delay'd not long, but from his tented dome
Issued, array'd in splendid arms; yet first
Prest on Elsweda's lips a tender kiss,
And held her hand. Tears o'er her blooming cheeks
Roll'd silent, and emotion swell'd her heart,
For on her parting spouse she knew devolve
England's last hope.

He to his various stand

Came ardent, and th' embodied host survey'd
Under their banners marshall'd: which full soon
He, bounding on his eager steed, led on
With far-resounding voice in vast array.

Standards innumerable waving shine
 O'er the throng'd nations, which the banded pow'rs
 Distinguish, as they move in squadrons dense
 United; steeds succeeding barbed steeds
 To distance infinite; while dazzling spears,
 And plumed helms, and shields, like one vast sea,
 Blaze as with fire, flashing o'er all the land.
 Clarions and trumpets, uttering martial noise,
 Echo o'er heav'n, and swell the neigh of steeds
 And choral strains of bards in ev'ry band
 Raising the songs of war. They move along,
 Numberless as the leaves that on the boughs
 Wave of some ancient forest, when the breeze
 Shakes from their surface the collected rains.
 With pow'r they rush, as torrents from the hills
 Pour roaring o'er the vales, that whelm along
 In their resistless course the woods and rocks,
 When all the rivers, surging o'er their banks
 Deluge the land. Nor less the mingling noise,
 The terror of their near approach, than when,
 Clouds heap'd on clouds amid the loaded air,
 Horrible tempests burst, that all the sky,
 Illumin'd with unceasing flashes, reels
 With storming rains and thunders.

England's King

Borne in the van upon his conscious steed
 Intrepid moves: and oft looks back to view
 Th' embattled legions, while undaunted hope
 Swells in his heart and joy, that now at last
 Has come that hour when all her miseries past

Book
 VIII.

V. 20—49.

His country shall avenge and end her woes.
 Yet damps that joy a thought that ere the night
 Death in his cold embrace so many brave
 Shall press on glory's bed. Thus occupied
 On lofty thoughts, around him throng his chiefs,
 As when along the east the glitt'ring clouds
 Crowd round the rising sun, what time his rays
 Crimson the placid ocean, and the earth
 Smiles in morn's fresh'ning glow. So pass'd the host;
 Deeming by prompt attack and feign'd retreat
 Forth from their camp t' elude the Danish foe,
 Till on the open champain they may wage
 More equal battle. But no such pretext
 Th' impetuous foe allows, who now aware,
 Furious comes pouring o'er the ravag'd plains
 To meet their long-expected march. All tents
 Vacant gave up their habitants to urge
 Or witness deeds of death. Shouting they come,
 Clashing their shields, invoking warlike Gods,
 Disorder'd, that from far the region round
 Resounds, as wide their hideous bands advance,
 As when a herd of lions o'er the wilds
 Of Afric thro' the night terrific rage
 When on the wind their hollow thunders borne
 Alarm the land and fires ascend to heav'n.
 Fierce-panting for the fight they rush t' oppose
 The English host, and glut their swords in blood;
 As when a flock of vultures in the wind
 Sagacious snuff the scent of death, and wing
 Exulting their aërial way from far

BOOK ·
 VIII.

V. 50—79.

O'er lofty mountains and deep vales, until
 They reach the plains bestrown with dead, and gorge
 Their hungry beaks in flesh.

Book
 VIII.
 V. 89-107.

Nor long their course,
 Ere obvious they discern the English pow'rs,
 Rang'd all in broad array of awful front,
 Where band on band, far-glitt'ring on the view,
 Stood firm as tow'rs: uplifted on the sight,
 As where in sacred Fohi's empire old
 Pekin's huge wall o'er steepest mountains rears
 Its giant bulk: then down the lowest vales
 Erects its pyramids, whose strength defends
 Mandarins, Bramins, Lamas, and the wealth
 Of thousand stately cities, from a foe
 Trooping from barren wilds to gain thro' blood
 Riches long-stor'd, and whelm disputed thrones.

Them opposite, the Danish legions soon
 In wide battalion stood, ranging their pow'rs,
 Spear-men and archers, steeds, and mailed ranks,
 And mighty chiefs, in savage raiment hid,
 That to th' astonish'd eye the host might seem
 Impenetrable, dazzling, as appear'd
 The mountainous barrier of solid ice
 Shielding the northern pole, to the dash'd gaze
 Of mariners when to explore new worlds
 They urge their daring prows, and from the mast
 Far-stretching see, amaz'd, tremendous isles,
 Indissoluble, cragg'd with frozen rocks.

Thus stood awhile the adverse hosts, and gaz'd
 Fierce on each other in terrific silence,
 When ere the clarions in th' uplifted hands
 Blew the loud sound of onset, lo! between
 Both armies, follow'd by a train of chiefs,
 Imperial Oskital conspicuous came
 And from his high-careering steed with voice
 Audacious thus the English host defied.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 108—124.

“ Which of the English chiefs, ere joins the storm
 Of battle, dares with Oskital contend?
 If any, come he forth: that I may give
 His body to the waiting wolves, and tear
 His crest presumptuous from his corse, to form
 Of his riv'n skull a polish'd drinking cup,
 Whence I may quaff rich mead to fav'ring Gods.”

Him glorying thus the generous Alwin heard
 Indignant, and in front advancing bold
 His royal chief address'd. “ No English heart
 Can fear yon boaster! I appear, and glad
 Accept his challenge, under hope my arm
 Shall teach his humbled pride and all yon host,
 The pow'r of valour in the cause of right.”

So saying, and from his sov'reign pleas'd assent
 Obtaining, with a band select of bards
 And noble thanes, witnesses of the fight,
 Proud he went forth, and on his prancing steed
 Met his insulting foe, to whom no pause

His ardent courage yielded for delay
 Of further speech : but ere the trumpet ceas'd
 The signal of assault, his flamy spear
 Poising, he urg'd his plumed steed, and drove
 Full on th' expectant Dane. He firm receiv'd
 Th' impetuous onset, and with like career
 Rush'd on his fierce opponent, who that shock
 On the broad orb of his wide-blazing shield
 Sustain'd unhurt. Soon both receding flew
 More furious on each other; loudly rang
 Their hollow shields, together dash'd; or smote
 Incessant by their massive spears, that oft
 Wielded on high, upon the shiver'd crest
 Descend tempestuous, till the English chief
 Lifts in his mighty arm a fragment riv'n
 Of his unequal lance. Which seen, at once
 Fiercer his foe springs on him, fir'd with hope
 To verify his vaunt: his aim perceiv'd
 Alwin eludes, and instant from his side
 Drawn, waves aloft his flaming sword: in vain
 The ruthless Oskital his murderous rage
 Vents on his adversary, and his blows
 On blows reiterate, wasting all his strength,
 Pours vehement o'er helm, and shield, and mail.
 For soon th' intrepid Alwin well prevents
 The meditated ruin: forward sprung,
 He marks a guardless moment, and the force
 Of his huge falchion on his foeman's casque
 Dashes precipitate: the pond'rous blow
 Unhors'd th' infuriate Dane: bleeding he falls

Book
 VIII.

V. 133—164.

With clamour. But not then the generous chief
 Tramples his prostrate enemy, but strait
 Down leaps from his proud steed, and on the ground
 Seizing the haughty Pagan, to his feet
 Uplifts him, and his grasp maintaining firm,
 Deals not less deadly blows, instant return'd
 By his recover'd foe. Such seem'd the fight
 As when in Indian wilds a serpent huge,
 Provok'd by other roaming monster, starts
 Aloft, and instant round the guardless foe
 Enwreathes his spotted folds, whose stifling weight
 Crushes with violent grasp the yielding bones:
 Roaring in anguish then, th' enormous beast
 Lion or Leopard, in his foamy jaws
 Seizes th' incumbent death. The desarts hear
 Yells and loud hisses load the shudd'ring air.

Book
 VIII.

V. 163—192.

So dreadful seem'd this fray, till on the ground
 Prostrate th' enormous Pagan groaning lies,
 While from his wounded side a sanguine stream
 Flows fast. Around him throng his wond'ring band
 To save their chief. He terrible and vast
 Seem'd to the fixed gaze, as when a whale
 Perceives his bulk assail'd by hostile spears,
 And downward rolls, tossing in agony,
 With stormy rage, until ascending soon
 From his huge nostrils he upsends aloft
 Torrents of blood, wide-redd'ning the green sea.

Such seem'd the mighty warrior, ere his chiefs

From that fierce conflict bore him to his lines,
 All-pale and faint: while to his eager bands
 Alwin return'd, and near advancing, call'd
 For instant onset.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 193—223.

Nor the royal chief
 Delay'd the dread assault, but while the sound
 Roll'd of unnumber'd trumpets thro' the air,
 The English pow'rs in dark battalion mov'd
 Onward from end to end. Horrible joins
 The shock of battle on th' opposing host,
 And loud the cry of warriors, as they meet
 Their foes in fight; with sound no less and pow'r,
 Than waves of some tumultuous vaulty sea,
 Sailing in lofty over-arching surge
 Upon the broad side of a rocky isle,
 That totters to its base, with all its towns
 And woods, and hills. Fierce rag'd the clash of arms;
 Shields dash'd on shields: hauberk, and mail, and spear
 Commingling rang. Men press'd on men. Swords blaze
 Terrible flames, as on the crashing helms
 They fall, tempestuous. Steeds with armed breast
 Meet steeds, till gor'd with ghastly wounds, they sink
 In agony. Confusion, leagued with death,
 Reigns universal. Thousands trampled fall
 Thro' either host, and blood in torrents rolls.
 Such was the conflict of the adverse hosts,
 As when beside the pole, if rising storms
 Afflict the sea, enormous fields of ice
 Opposite-moving on each other dash
 In hideous tumult: shatter'd mountains fall
 Ruinous on ev'ry side, and thousand isles

Roll separated thro' the raging waves.
 O'er all the heav'n a night of weapons hung,
 Flying in iron storm : barb'd arrows sang
 Frantic for blood : red-gleaming jav'lins sped,
 Like light'nings thro' the air, with pond'rous force
 Slaught'ring where'er they fell. The deathful clang
 Resounding thro' heav'n's vault scarce left the ear
 Discernment of the clarions' roar, or shouts
 Victorious of pursuing bands, or groans
 Of fallen ranks. Yet audible were cries
 Of Danes, invoking to their side the Gods
 Of battle, whose prompt aid they ask to send
 A thousand foes to Hela, and to lift
 Themselves to Valhall's palaces. The songs
 Of bards in either host confus'd with noise
 Of instruments swell'd sad the cries of death,
 As fiercer grew the conflict, and the earth
 Trembled beneath the press of charging steeds,
 And trampling legions, and huge heaps of slain.
 The glitter, tumult, roar of fighting hosts
 Seem'd (if with earthly scene they hold compare)
 As when at dead of night from murky clouds
 Incumbent on the Alps, broad light'nings flash
 Continuous glaring ; and the heav'n-wide thunder
 Round their horizon rolling slow, at last
 Peals thro' the vales profound, and hollow caves,
 Alone a prelude to the warn'd approach
 Of bursting earthquakes, which the mountainous range
 Shake from their dark foundations, and down hurl,
 Loosen'd precipitate from skyey heights,

BOOK
VIII.

V. 224—253.

Fields of conglomerated snow and ice,
 That whelming forests, bridges, caverns, tow'rs .
 With formless ruins fill the bury'd vales.
 With such confused terrors flam'd, rag'd, fell,
 The battle. Havoc unappeas'd proceeds.
 Numberless was the slaughter. Many a chief
 Of noblest birth lay gasping on the ground,
 Mingled with throngs of low degree. With ire
 Ungovernable swells the deepen'd fight,
 Furious alike, where'er the course might turn,
 Yet seem'd it most to storm, where 'mid the van
 Guthrun undaunted fought, and thro' the ranks
 Impetuous driving on his gory steed,
 Came as in Eastern wars advances huge
 The tow'red elephant, who thro' a host
 Of prostrate foes invulnerable moves,
 While nations tremble at his single view.

Book
 VIII.

V. 254—282.

Around their monarch contest fierce arose
 Of noblest warriors, burning to partake
 Dangers and death: while as they proudly fought,
 From ev'ry mouth resounded high the strains
 Of martial song; their fathers' sainted fame,
 Or their own stern resolves smiling to die
 Amid the gory battle, sword in hand.
 Shouting they cry that Odin to the war
 Descended, even now with Frea joins
 And the swift host of Valkyries to chuse
 The fallen brave, and on their glitt'ring cars
 Bear them to heav'n's bright halls. Here chief each host

For mast'ry strove, while fast on either side
 Ranks mingling fell Raging with mighty arm
 Among the English host dire Frena, chief
 Of many warlike pow'rs, dealt hideous death.
 Dark o'er the plain the wounded warriors lay
 With riven limbs, as when tempestuous fires
 Have seiz'd some ancient forest, elms or oaks;
 Stretch'd o'er the side of some extended hill
 Their blacken'd trunks remain, tho' all their boughs
 Flames have devour'd. Whom in his mid career
 Of slaughter Devon's duke beheld, and stern
 Advancing, thus address'd.

“Insatiate, hold
 Thy murd'rous hand, and with an equal foe
 Contend, who boasts him born of princely line,
 Proud as thine own, but of less savage soul:
 For never thee woman with human breast
 Nurtur'd, but in some forest or deep den
 A wolf has suckled with her horrent dugs.
 So fell and dark is thy malignant rage.”

To whom the Danish chief. “I know thee well,
 Oddune, in battle fam'd; and high my soul
 Swells with delight that to my arm at last
 Odin has sent thee. Me thine equal call
 Never, but thy superior own, as now
 Thy fate, ere we two part, shall amply prove.
 Assist me, mighty Tyr, thou God renown'd
 In single fight. And thou, fair Queen of heav'n,
 Stand at my side, and range thy splendid host

Book
 VIII.

V. 283—311.

Of Valkyries to view me instant send
To Hela's dismal world this dreaming wretch."

Book
VIII.

V. 312—339.

Nor longer held they parley, but at once
Each on the other sprang: their foaming steeds
Shock'd dreadful, breast on breast: while high uprear'd
Their mingling limbs entwin'd, as o'er the field
Echoed the thunder of the fighting chiefs,
Armour on armour clashing, but not long
Endur'd their fierce encounter, for the spear
Of Oddune, driven by his furious arm,
Dash'd thro' his adversary's shield and mail,
Piercing his breast. Reeling he fell with noise,
Impetuous: and on earth essay'd in vain
To draw th' inherent weapon. Ghastly smiles
Complacent o'er his visage flew, and gleams
Of transient lustre fir'd his closing eyes,
While thus his falt'ring voice his hopes express'd.

" Joyful I die: I go to Odin's halls,
Borne on his shining car. I shall advance
Thro' Valhall's palaces with numerous pomp
Of steeds and warriors in my service slain,
Array'd in rich attire. Chiefs, slain of old,
Will on my entrance from their glitt'ring seats
In honour rise. Gods shall with pride admire
The gorgeous spectacle. Friends, fear not death:
Die with your chief. Save but my bleeding corse.
With it my war-horse bury and my arms.
See! high I grasp my sword—I die—I die."

Nor did not his fierce band the dying words
 Observe of their proud chief, but thronging round
 Tumultuous, from his corse the English host
 Immediate drove: while near him, ere his breath
 Forsook his pallid lips, his eager bards
 Struck to his fame the sounding harps, and sung.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 340—367.

“ Farewell, great Frena, happy in thy death,
 As in thy life unequall'd: henceforth lives
 Thy name in song. Boundless shall be thy fame,
 Like the vast Ash that overspreads all worlds,
 Rooted in hell, whose mingling branches hang
 O'er heav'n and earth. Thou go'st to Odin's halls,
 And shalt be rang'd with Heroes to enjoy
 Battles and feasts, till that tremendous day
 When Heimdal on the rainbow's top shall blow
 From his terrific trumpet a vast roar
 Rolling amid creation to convene
 Th' alarmed Gods: while from th' abyss beneath
 Surtur shall lead his blazing hosts, and all
 The miscreated monsters, nature's foes,
 Shall burst their chains, and sally thro' mid heav'n.
 Then Odin thee shall mark with conscious joy
 And call thee to his side, when Gods around
 Fly in confusion. Nor thy glory ends,
 Tho' heav'n and earth predestin'd fires consume,
 When Gods shall yield to fate. Gimlé remains,
 Seat of the blest, where thro' eternal time
 Thy mighty soul shall commune with the brave.”

Scarce ceas'd the song, ere ranging thro' the fight
 The sov'reign Guthrun to the spot advanc'd,
 Fury conspicuous in his eyes. Aghast
 He started back, so sudden to behold
 Lifeless extended on the ground a chief
 Far-fam'd in war. Instant his panting steed
 He quitted, and the dead man's clay-cold hand
 Grasping with sighs, his friend thus fond address'd.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 368—395.

“ Do I then lose thee, Frena, of my chiefs
 Bravest and best? matchless in manly arts,
 Whether to guide the fiery steed, or dart
 With pow'r th' unerring spear, or o'er the sea
 Steer sure thy star-led course. But oh! I see
 Glory yet claims thy soul. I see thy sword
 Gleam in thy blood-stain'd hand. What fate awaits
 The envied brave, but in the battle's roar
 To fall, transpierc'd with wounds, while wond'ring Gods
 Look on, and Odin in his brilliant car
 Stands ready to receive the parting soul,
 And o'er the green worlds waft it to the skies?
 Thee ev'ry dame shall mourn, who sole the brave
 Love and revere. In ev'ry song the bards
 Shall chaunt thy name. And never shall my heart
 Thy worth forget, but emulate thy deeds.
 Yet unaveng'd thy death shall never be.
 Lead on, ye captains, in the gory fight
 Slaughter shall tell our grief for Frena lost.”

So said, he on his ardent war-horse sprung

And led th' impatient squadrons where the fight.
 Rag'd fiercest. From before their dreadful course
 The English bands retir'd, for deep dismay
 Sudden o'erpow'r'd their hearts, such carnage round
 Amaz'd their view, dealt by the frenzied arms
 Of multitudes, impell'd by dark revenge.
 In vain their animating song the bards
 Pour thro' the English troops. Hianfrid flies,
 Terrified, and his steps full many, seiz'd
 With sympathetic terror, swift pursue.
 Yet join not all their flight, nor without cost
 Of many a gallant life this sad default
 Escapes. And ah! lamented fate, as bold
 He rush'd th' assailants' fury to withstand,
 The gallant Berthun fell; a youthful thane
 Of noblest promise, by his num'rous band
 And by his sov'reign lov'd. Dreadful he came
 On his gore-spotted steed, wielding his spear.
 With mighty arm, by his selected troops
 Follow'd, who aim'd sole to oppose the wrath
 Of Frena's train, by Guthrun now led on,
 Join'd too by Sidroc, and the martial host
 Of Amund, kingly chief. Whom, as they pass'd
 Resistless thro' the battle, soon perceiv'd
 Berthun the brave, and to their triple pow'rs
 Successfully awhile oppos'd the force
 Of his intrepid band.

Check'd was the course
 Of the proud-raging Pagans, till aware
 Of his desired prey from mid the host

Fierce Amund sprang, all-arm'd in brass, and swift
 As light'ning, while the youth with numbers fought,
 Hurl'd on his sounding helm the pond'rous weight
 Of his huge falchion. Down the hero fell,
 Riv'n thro' the brain. Sleep overcast his eyes.
 Full many a tear his early fate shall mourn
 Where on the woody side of Axham's vale
 His pleasant dwelling stands. In vain shall look
 At dawn or eve his tender wife to hail
 His glad return, but hopeless to her heart
 Press his fair image in her smiling babe.
 He fell, as by some murm'ring riv'let's side
 The tow'ring poplar, whose broad branches shade
 A rural cottage, guardian of its peace,
 Sinks crashing, and up-tears the flow'ry bank,
 Whelm'd by the tempest; the defenceless cot
 Howls to the moaning wind: the birds behold
 Their nests, their young, in ruin lost: the brook
 Rolls o'er the tree whose image long it lov'd.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 426—454

For Berthun slain a gen'ral grief arose
 Throughout the English bands. Nor of his fate
 Was fame th' unwelcome tidings to proclaim
 Tardy: which soon the English monarch's ear
 Caught, where amid the battle's distant roar
 Dauntless he fought. Provok'd, and to the soul
 Deep-mov'd with noble rage and keen regret,
 Dreadful he issued from conflicting bands,
 And loudly summoning his trusty chiefs
 Rush'd to that scene of death. The noise of war

Was at his presence hush'd. Awful he came,
 As the grim monarch of the forest wilds,
 Who lodg'd at midnight in his den, if dark
 Hurricanes sweep along the thund'ring air,
 Awakes; roll'd downward in tumultuous ruin,
 Rocks crash, and suddenly hot light'ning-fires
 Invade the secrets of his blood-stain'd cave :
 Then his red eye-balls glaring blaze : he stalks
 Howling to open air, with sulph'rous flames
 Luridly bright, and with astounding roars
 Mocks the dread thunder and o'er awes the storm.
 With heart'ning voice th' indignant sov'reign cheers
 The dubious bands and to his side invokes
 Osmund, and Oddune, Alwin, and the young
 Edgar, and many a thane who near them fought.
 His look inspir'd fresh courage, and each heart
 Throbb'd high with ardour to renew the fight ;
 Rush tow'rd the gallant King innumerable bands :
 The summon'd chieftains at the monarch's side
 Appear, and to their different stations haste,
 As he directs, and soon behind the shade
 Of the broad kingly banner leading on
 Where deadliest rag'd the battle, move conjunct
 Indissoluble hosts. Nor obvious stood
 Th' astonish'd Danes. Flight and disorder'd rout
 Turn'd their o'erwhelmed pow'rs : while slaughter rag'd
 Ineffably obscene and furious. Now
 Resistance none they dare, but fly dismay'd.
 O'er all the field amid the Danish host
 Confusion reigns. Innumerable fate

Book
 VIII.

V. 435—444.

Despoils their legions. Hideous swells the din
 And storm of triumph beyond mortal thought;
 Nor seem'd the dread turmoil to cease, but still
 As ev'ning o'er the clouded skies drew on
 Her gradual shades, warning th' approach of night,
 More fierce the carnage grew. Heav'n with the roar
 Resounded, and the champain swam with blood.
 The English monarch thro' the central van
 Pierc'd of the Danish host. They routed fly
 On ev'ry hand, by equal pow'rs pursued,
 And leave the field bestrown with banners, drench'd
 In blood, and helms, and spears, and shatter'd mail,
 Red-gleaming in the parting rays of eve.

Book
 VIII.

V. 485—513.

Harrow'd with anguish at that fatal sight
 And torn with rage to mark their favor'd Danes
 Driv'n from the field of death, th' infernal pow'rs
 Hov'ring aloft in air, their ponder'd thought
 Prepare to execute, nor longer stay
 Their needful aid to Guthrun and his host.
 Sailing o'er all the heav'n on cloudy wings
 Forthwith from stores mysterious they infuse
 Darkness into the spongy air, and breathe
 Mists of grim influence from their viewless heights.
 Sudden-descending over all the sky,
 Clouds, heap'd on clouds by rising gusts, obscure
 The straining gaze: and rapid night involves
 The total landscape. In vain the English pow'rs
 Seek their distracted way, such sable gloom
 Prevents the sight. Slackens the hot pursuit.

The conscious angel-bands their arts apply
 To quell the premature inroad of night,
 Wafted from wings of hell: but these renew
 Their hideous exhalations, nor the skill
 Fear of heav'n's blessed sons, unus'd to arts
 So dire. Nor rest they here: but strait prepare
 Illusions bolder, higher, big with guile
 Of subtler import. Lo! before the path
 Of Guthrun and his host, as from the field
 Retiring they avoided final rout,
 Gradual disclos'd to view, from mid the womb
 Of darkness, issued a majestic form
 All-arm'd in gold, with hauberk huge and spear.
 Around his lofty brows a helmed crown
 Blaz'd radiance, brighter than the beams of noon.
 His mighty arm upheld on high a shield
 Of gorgeous frame. Sublime he stood, and lean'd
 O'er a refulgent car, whose hollow arch
 Construct of burnish'd steel, glitt'ring as gems,
 Held in its ample vault in splendid heaps
 Squadrons of bleeding dead, their crimson swords
 Grasp'd in their mailed hands. In shadowy train
 Around the car, which glaring tygers drew,
 Stood rang'd celestial essences on steeds,
 Sprinkled with blood, and pois'd on fiery wings.
 Lo! on the left a certain Goddess form
 Sat in her beamy car, retir'd: her mien
 Matchless in beauty, yet with look severe,
 Spoke her the Queen of heav'n. Fatigue might seem
 Apparent in her air, as late return'd

Book
 VIII.

V. 514—543.

From scenes of carnage, where her destin'd right
 To half the slaughter'd brave she sped to claim.
 Amazement seiz'd the Pagan host : their shouts
 Tumultuous rise to heav'n, as all the God
 Recognize, and to heav'n's great King they sound
 Clamorous exult with voice and stricken shields.
 Then hush'd in wonder, solemn silence reigns ;
 Save where beyond amid the final rear
 The clash of armour from pursuing bands
 Sails on the sullen wings of sablest night.
 Rearing his giant-form, the warrior God
 Tow'rd the mid van inclin'd his awful eye.
 Where stood th' imperial chief, and seem'd in act
 To speak, nor long his mighty voice delay'd
 Terrible exclamation.

“ Warriors brave,
 And thou, bold King, forbear dismay : compose
 Your all-disorder'd legions, nor disdain
 Retreat. I none accuse ; but rest content
 With the past slaughter. My capacious car,
 And the broad equipage of my fair Queen
 Already groan beneath a load of slain.
 Solicit not your thoughts now to prolong
 This work of death : lest your insatiate foes,
 Triumphant with new aids, of vict'ry boast
 Unmerited. Chief now your efforts blend
 Best to retire from battle, and regain
 The living ranks, that for renew'd attacks
 More prosp'rous you may save your weary pow'rs.
 Meanwhile my aid shall hinder the pursuit

Book
 VIII.

V. 544—573.

Of your insulting foes. I will invoke
 Thor, mighty ruler of the air, to ope
 His vast-resounding halls, and on their host
 Pour instant a destructive storm, which ye
 Strait shall behold, but shall unhurt escape."

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 574—602.

So saying, he his radiant form outstretch'd
 Deep on a sable cloud, and high upborne,
 Extended o'er the sky his flamy spear,
 That seem'd a comet or the trailing blaze
 Of some huge meteor. Then with thund'rous roar
 Of his exerted voice, shouting he call'd
 On Thor, his eldest born, predestin'd King
 Of the wide airy regions: and him bade
 Uncloud his halls magnificent, and forth
 Display to sight their heav'nly pomp: nor cease
 From their original palaces to pour
 Storms of unwonted thunder, fires, and rains,
 And blasting hails, and hurricanes, to overwhelm
 Legions of foes pursuing, but the Danes
 Protect with shadowy covert from their aim.
 Immediate at command, all heav'n disrob'd
 Of darkness to the dazzled gaze unfolds
 Thrudwanger's palaces, the domes superb
 Of mightiest Thor. Innumerable halls
 Various in aspect, flaming-bright, or veil'd
 In rolling vapours, to th' amazed sense
 Betoken'd pow'r, magnificence, and state
 Transcendently immense. Some might appear
 The dwellings of the thunder, some th' abodes

Of gloomy tempests; others might be deem'd
 The hollow caves of winds, or fiery-red
 The chambers where the light'nings hid their stores.
 Yet all by lofty columns were distinct
 Of golden frame, brilliant as suns, that rais'd
 Domes silver-roof'd, with various stars inlaid,
 Within and o'er whose azure-tinted poins
 Clouds floating play'd. Majestic was the view,
 Where'er the eye o'er all heav'n's open'd vault
 Could stretch its wond'ring gaze. Far in the midst,
 Within his awful palace sat august
 Upon his burning throne unconquer'd Thor,
 Cloth'd in his belt of pow'r, and in his hand
 He stay'd his iron mace, a mighty frame,
 With which he tames the hideous habitants
 Who range th' abyss of air, and those huge shapes
 That dwell in fiery Surtur's giant worlds.
 A cloud-compelling chariot near him stood,
 By four swift beings drawn. Awful he rose,
 And mounting his broad seat, gave loose the reins
 To their impetuous fury. His swift touch
 Opens on ev'ry side the sounding doors
 Or dark-expanding gates of thousand halls:
 Whence all-invisible the roaring thunder
 Vollsies thro' scatter'd clouds. Red light'nings fly
 Fork'd, or in ardent globes, o'er all the heav'n.
 Winds rush tempestuous down with deafning noise;
 And streaming rains, and hails, commix'd, descend
 In solid deluges. Trembles the earth.
 Thor's palaces with vivid splendors shine,

Book

VIII.

v. 603—632.

Of meteor-fires. Resound their hollow roofs,
 And caves profound: their lofty pillars shake,
 While Thor tremendous-sailing thro' the maze
 Of his wide mansions his hot wrath explodes.
 Fury and desolation fill the air.
 As bidden by the sire omnipotent,
 The conscious God th' obedient tempest darts
 Sole on th' astonish'd English, from whose view
 He veils the brilliant pomp, and seems a night
 Of gloomy horror. But the routed Danes
 He covers with a silv'ry cloud, of pow'r
 To ward the dreadful vollied hurricane,
 Unpierc'd. Transparent still, that these behold
 The vengeful God exulting in his might,
 And witness all his rage. Astonishment
 Palsied their sense, as gazing toward heav'n
 They stood like statues.

Nor less wonder seiz'd
 The angel host such complicated pow'r
 Of dread illusion to behold reveal'd
 By the fierce sons of darkness. Yet to aid
 The English legions their immediate thought
 Arose, and to prevent their smallest view
 Of the terrific vision, they expand
 A misty veil obscure, whose denser folds
 Scarce serv'd to shield the light'ning's flaming wrath
 Or the full thunder's pealing continents.

Dishearten'd, and by darkness and the rage
 Of the conflicting storm confus'd and turn'd,

Most their collected pow'rs for swift retreat
Prepare, and cease pursuit. Th' angelic pow'rs
Restore at length the dewy light of eve,
And dissipated now th' unnat'ral gloom,
A genial twilight cheers the murky air,
Illumining afar th' embattled scene;
'Till the receding vision onward leads
The swift-obesant Danes.

BOOK
VIII.

V. 662.—691.

Them on the left
 Where their last phalanx ended, Osmund drove
 Unwearied, and by beaming light consol'd:
 Nor ceas'd the long pursuit, till near the verge
 Of their extended camp his pow'rs arriv'd.
 There, whether by some watchful angel led,
 Or happy chance, the gen'rous chieftain spies,
 Close on the outskirt of the tented field,
 A band of armed Danes pursuing swift
 One unarm'd man, whom a deep-clanging chain
 That from him hung bespoke some captive friend
 In pristine battle lost. Compassion sprung
 Immediate in his heart, and noble rage;
 That instant to the flying man's relief
 He sallies on his rapid steed: and soon
 Dealing destruction from his light'ning sword,
 Scatters th' unequal crew: whom fled, he speeds
 T' accost their meditated prey. Ah! then,
 What words can paint the noble warrior's look,
 When in the hapless fugitive he knew,
 (Spite of the wounds that stain'd his face with gore,)
 His own lost son. Down from his steed he sprung.

And in his arms the miserable youth
 Embracing fond, hung o'er him. On the neck
 Each of the other sank, with joy o'erpow'r'd,
 And throbbing painful extacy, too full
 For words to utter. Silence lent to each
 Pause for most dear affection to express
 Rapture ineffable of either heart.
 Swift to the aid of their lov'd chief had come
 His valiant band, when all with mute surprize
 Witnessing this endearing scene remain'd
 Tenderly fix'd in meekest awe. The face
 Of many a vêt'ran warrior, brown with toils,
 Relax'd to gentle pity, till a tear
 Roll'd o'er his manly cheek, and ev'ry heart
 Felt the warm glow of sympathetic joy.
 Greatly were all delighted to regain
 The gallant Athelard, in war renown'd,
 And to his sov'reign dear. Fervent they press
 Around him, longing from his lips to hear
 The full relation of his dangers past.
 Nor to their anxious questions does he stay
 Full answer, telling that the lot of war
 Doom'd him a captive in that dreadful fight
 By Wareham's walls: that with the Danish host
 Led hitherward, the blood-delighting priests,
 Of warlike Gods, selected him to wage
 Combat with savage chiefs, whence to infer
 Auguries for th' ensuing fight: and when
 Victorious in each tournament, he left
 No hope of prosp'rous battle for the Danes,

Book
VIII.

V. 692—721.

Their fierce revenge had doom'd that with the dawn
 His wounded body, of his armour stript,
 And bound in chains, should on the altar smoke
 A sacrifice to Odin, which foul fate
 He now, thro' aid of heav'n, by flight escap'd.—
 All struck with dumb amaze the dreadful tale
 Listen, and soon the galling chain remove
 From his broad limbs. Then on a warlike steed
 Springs the recover'd chief, and proud beside
 His noble father rides, in mutual joy
 Lost, and surprize.

BOOK
 VIII.

V. 722—751.

All tow'rd the friendly camp
 Return elate. There now the English bands,
 Collected, their diminish'd pow'rs dispos'd
 Thro' the throng'd tents. His care to yield around
 The gen'rous sov'reign passes; tender soothes
 The wounded warriors: their heroic deeds
 Applauds: relieves their pain: with promise glad
 Exalts the hopes of all, and to high sense
 Rouses of future glory. Thro' the camp
 Now fame arose of Osmund's train return'd
 And Athelard regain'd, living and safe.
 The youth, in fight distinguish'd, to each heart
 Was dear. The happy father, and the son
 Late mourn'd as lost, thus all-unhop'd restor'd,
 Th' impatient monarch soon accosts. Delight
 Throbb'd equal in his heart, and greetings glad
 Deceive the time. Oft ask'd, the youth repeats
 His strange adventures. In the sight of all
 The grateful monarch to the new-won chief

Presents a full array of armour, rich
 With gold, emboss'd with many a gem; and adds
 A proud-rein'd steed, terrific in the fight,
 Royally deck'd.

Book
 VIII.
 V. 752-761.

Proud triumph thro' the camp
 Reigns gen'ral. At the festive regal board
 Appear th' assembled chiefs, and sacred priests,
 Bards, and the honor'd female train. Beside
 The monarch on each hand was plac'd, as wont,
 A favor'd minstrel, prompt to sound the fame
 Of noble deeds. Gladly the King dispens'd
 The plenteous feast around, whom opposite
 His lovely consort sat. She ev'ry eye
 Pleas'd by her gentle acts, as she inspir'd
 Gay mirth around, proving how charms the heart
 Beauty with affable endearment join'd.
 Such the mild grace of her engaging mien,
 As when in spring the modest hawthorn scents
 The joyous air with fragrance, and delights
 Th' admiring eye with her white chaplet, spread
 Soft o'er her robe of green. Fair virgins bear
 To ev'ry chief delicious mead, and wine
 Of costly growth, and add approving smiles,
 Valour's dear guerdon. Choral bards begin
 High songs of war, and in resounding lays
 Celebrate chiefs of nobler name. Thy deeds,
 Bold Alwin, roll'd in lofty strains. Nor praise
 Was silent to the name of Oddune, great
 In fight; nor Osmund, brave, benevolent:
 Nor Edgar, premature in manly pow'r:

Nor Harold, gallant and high-soul'd : nor thee,
 Lov'd Athelard, the answering harp declin'd
 To sound with swelling pomp, while it attun'd
 Thy acts and hard escapes. In ev'ry song
 Echoed the name of Alfred, great in war,
 As on the throne of peace. To ev'ry chief
 The conscious monarch honour due ascribes.
 Hianfrid gently he reproves, whose flight
 All-sudden on the dang'rous edge of war
 Fatal events induc'd. The vainer youth
 Gloomily sat; he yet his name in song
 Heard not and this reproof to his dark rage
 Added new stings.

The thoughtful sov'reign now

Opes to the full assembly his intent
 By early dawn an embassy to send
 Intreating from the hostile camp a truce
 Of battle, while sepulchral rites are paid
 To the fall'n dead. To his instruction high
 Anticipating England's future state
 When victory shall thro' her realm diffuse
 Desired peace, each heart beats proud assent,
 And longs for days of preconceived glory.
 So wan'd their hours.

Nor less amid the Danes

Reigns glad festivity. Amaze usurps
 Each throbbing breast with memory of the scene
 Beheld in heav'n. Extatic fervor swells
 Their thoughts to loftiest hope, and joy in aid
 Of present Deities. The raptur'd bards

Book
 VIII.

V. 782-817.

Resound the praise of Odin, and the Queen
 Of Valhall's glories, and insatiate lust
 Awake of carnage. Thousand vows are heard
 On ev'ry hand, amid the next hot fight
 To die transfix'd with wounds, when the tir'd arm
 Has sent to Hela's realms unnumber'd foes.
 This savage rage the demon pow'rs perceive
 Where on their secret flight they hang on high,
 Observing what effect Satanic arts,
 Unfolded, on the Danish spirits raise;
 Nor now unanswer'd seems their fondest wish.
 Exulting they behold the Pagans' thoughts
 Sublim'd to fiercest frenzy, nor despair
 Thro' such infuriate instruments to win
 Full victory, such novel ardour fir'd
 The warriors' heart, to see amid their war
 The Gods themselves engag'd.

Now to his host

Th' infernal monarch tells, that soon as pause
 Of battle shall allow occasion meet,
 He deems it wisdom to display to sense
 Of Guthrun, thoughtful chief, in vision vast
 The fancied worlds of Odin, and the scenes
 Of wonder through creation, by the bards
 Taught and rehears'd in solemn strains. Whence thus
 Inflam'd with credulous awe he may arouse
 His followers to yet fiercer height of rage
 Nor cease the madd'ning tumult, till the foe
 In irresistible destruction whelm'd
 Yield all the land to its just conquerors.

VOL. I.

3 A

Book
 VIII.

V. 812—841.

All praise the deep design: and plot to mark
Fit time to execute their dark intent.

BOOK
VIII.

V. 842—863.

Now o'er the world on silent pinions flew
The sable-coated night: nor yet the moon
Opening her shadowy chambers from the east
Look'd out with golden eye. To welcome rest
Throughout the English camp the chiefs retire;
But not Hianfrid. Sullen, and inflam'd
With disappointed rage, he sole remain'd
Watchful within his tent and ponder'd deep
Thoughts of revenge, and dark conspiracy,
Yet mask'd with guile. Longing he hop'd for morn,
That with remark'd occasion, he might seize
Some unsuspected trial of attempts,
Doom'd in his gloomy mind.

With lustre meek

O'er the serener heav'n angelic shapes
Floated, from earth unseen, yet mingling oft
Their starry-vested legions, as in turn
They met, while under their protective wings
The favor'd nation slept, and soothing dreams
Cheer'd their sweet slumbers to imagin'd peace.

ALFRED.

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK IX.

Hianfrid, having solicited permission, is sent with a flag of truce into the Danish camp. Here he contrives to get admittance into the tent of Kenwulph, of whom he darkly enquires what would be the reward of a revolt. Not finding an answer from Kenwulph agreeable to his wishes, he goes to Oskital and is promised power and dignity. The object of the truce being granted, the English dead are interred. Funeral song of Berthun. Alfred's contemplations and advice. The Danes also bury their countrymen fallen in the late battle. Obsequies of Frena, and song of the bards to his memory. During the night, Guthrun visits the tomb of Frena, and invokes his ghost to favor and assist the Danes. By the illusion of the demons, the ghost of Frena appears, and announces to Guthrun that Odin is about to display to him the glories of Valhalla. Odin appears, and after entrancing Guthrun, shews him a vision of the Gothic heaven. During the display, Odin gives him correspondent advice inciting him to fierceness, and presents him with celestial armour. They return to earth. Guthrun inflamed to a high pitch of enthusiasm and fury, enters the Danish camp.

ALFRED.

BOOK IX.

V. 1—19

SOON as the orient morning's upward beam
Had ting'd with gold the lark's dew-glitt'ring wings
Singing amid the rosy clouds, aris'n
Hianfrid to the regal mansion hastes,
Where as inspir'd with anxious zeal to free
His name from hated censure, and regain
The monarch's favor, earnest he intreats
That in th' approaching embassy himself
May own a place, nor mid the camp remain
Object of scorn, till worthy deeds may win
Merited honor.

To his meek request
The sov'reign, ready to forgive, nor prone
To mark a fault acknowledg'd and deplor'd
Yields glad assent. Instant the active thane
Prepares th' expectant heralds, ancient bards,
Clad in their flowing robes and in their hands
Bearing the sacred harp. Their honor'd train
Hianfrid, and his wont companion-friend

Harold the brave, conduct, and solemn wave
 The snow-white flag of truce. Them soon the King
 Instructs from Guthrun and th' associate chiefs
 To ask a day's becoming rest of war,
 Till in their last sad beds the fallen brave
 Shall decent be inhum'd, nor on the earth
 All red with gore deform the face of day.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 20—46.

As taught, the ready embassy proceeds
 Strait to the hostile camp: and soon approach
 The tented dome of its superior King,
 Their peaceful ensign, as they pass, from all
 Commanding rev'rence due. Their mission strait
 They open to the Pagan chief, and ask
 The truce desir'd. The thoughtful King delays
 Immediate answer, but first dooms to seek
 Of holy prophetesses sage advice,
 If even short cessation of the war
 Will now be grateful to expecting Gods.
 The sacred dames appear at call, and hear
 The purpos'd embassy. Forthwith their hands
 Unfurl the magic Reafen, while with voice
 Of charmed song their murm'ring lips invoke
 Attendant spirits to reveal by signs
 The will of fate. Nor such their pray'r preferr'd
 Heard not the watchful demons, who aware
 Of direr mischief brooding from afar
 Against the faithful pow'rs, with joy prepar'd
 Responsive omens, for they sought delay.
 Vigilant they expected, that meantime

The Danish fleet immense should o'er the waves
 Steer its swift course to Exham's tented shores,
 Bearing innumerable aids of banded hosts
 Eager to join their fellows, and o'erwhelm
 Th' unconquer'd provinces. So deeming, strait
 On wings unseen they sail around, and touch
 With dark mysterious hand the wavy folds
 Of the broad banner. Instant as with life
 Gifted, the sacred bird exulting lifts
 His sable wings, emblem of pleas'd assent:
 Which plain response the holy dames proclaim
 To all th' assembled throng. The willing King
 Now to th' expectant embassy assures
 His promise to concede their meet request:
 But first detains awhile the herald-bards
 Thro' fond desire to hear from these the strains
 Of martial song, as utter'd by his foes.
 Pleas'd, and with festive eagerness, he calls
 His own high-honour'd train of bards, to mark
 Alike th' unusual lays, or with contest
 Of their own pow'rs, to rouse the swelling pomp
 Of warlike melody.

Them thus employ'd
 Hianfrid (marking glad th' occasion) asks
 Permission from the King to leave awhile,
 Feigning desire rather to see and hold
 Converse unwont with Kenwulph, chief once known,
 Ere to the Danish rule he join'd his pow'rs.
 Ready the King assents, and to his side
 Adds a conducting guide, who may escort

BOOK
 IX.

V. 49—78.

His passage to the Mercian leader's tent. Book
 Together these depart, and soon arrive IX.
 The glitt'ring dome of Kenwulph, princely-deck'd, v. 79—107.
 Before whose entrance splendid Tufas wav'd,
 Ensigns of royalty. Hianfrid here
 Announc'd, bids wait awhile his guide, until
 Himself return, as from the spacious tent
 Kenwulph forth issuing the remember'd youth
 Accosts. A gloom of sorrow, in his mien
 Apparent, damp'd the friendly words of joy
 Utter'd by the revolted chief. Apart
 The youthful thane strait asks that they retire,
 Where unobserv'd he safely may disclose
 Thoughts of deep import lab'ring in his heart.
 Within the ample tent both turn direct,
 Where others all remov'd, and ev'ry guard
 Secur'd of closest privacy, at length,
 Mysterious evil brooding in his look,
 And with half-falt'ring voice, the Thane thus spoke.

“ Imperial sov'reign, fellow-warrior once,
 Dare I in memory of former friendship
 Utter to thy discreeter bosom thoughts
 Conceiv'd by others than thyself, yet scarce
 With doubt express'd. But be assur'd, there are
 Within the English camp, I say not who,
 What chieftains high and prudent, that admire
 Rather thy conduct, having join'd thy pow'rs
 To the more potent side, whose countless host,
 Invincible, deriding opposition, soon

Shall full subdue these realms, and dire revenge
 Wreak on their foes perverse. There are who thee
 Applaud, and thy example envy much
 Rather than waste in perils and in wars
 Yonder their lives still hazarded, expos'd
 To toils and sufferings infinite, with chance
 None of success, of honour, or reward.
 Yonder we gain no pow'r, no envied glory,
 But constant must obey one zealot man,
 Intent on fancied schemes of future peace,
 Wealth, greatness, glory, sole in his own thought
 Existing: but who others' merit owns
 Never, or not rewards: perhaps whose pow'r,
 Abridg'd by our bold foe, may not extend
 Duly to compensate heroic deeds.
 Here thee, whom higher hopes have hither led,
 We see a King: before thy splendid dome
 Wave high the glitt'ring Tufas, emblems proud
 Of royalty: and to thy stately pomp
 Obedient trains submit. What then, if soon,
 Following thy great example, other chiefs
 Should to th' opposing host conjoin their pow'rs?
 Would their reward prove equal to thine own?"

Book
 IX.

V. 108—135.

With air dejected and a sigh deep-heav'd
 From his full heart, the Mercian chief replied.

"Alas! that my seditious deeds allure
 Others their sad example to pursue!
 Ah! much-deceiv'd, unconscious youth, dispel

Thoughts of such import, in their consequence
 Hideous and terrible. Deem not this shew
 Of sov'reignty, this idle empty glare
 Of titled royalty, can e'er repay
 The loss of inward peace. These splendors yield
 Never one moment's comfort, while the thought
 Of my past guilt, and treacherous baseness, steeps
 In keen remorse and conscious agony
 My wearied senses, without hope, or end.
 Ill have I barter'd for the name of King,
 Innocence, truth, and honour lost! My heart
 Upbraids me still, and ever to my ear
 Whispers the name of—villain: that I hate
 The light of day. I lay me down in grief.
 I waken in despair. The festive board
 Yields me no joy; but I remember still
 That I am scorn'd of all: by all the good
 Hated or overlook'd. Here I remain,
 Aw'd by the savage Oskital, nor aught
 Can Guthrun, chief of nobler nature, soothe
 My troubled mind. Would that I could return
 To duty, and resume my former state!
 But that remains not. No! hence be that thought!
 How would each meanest eye glance secret scorn
 On all my steps, while Alfred all should love
 And hail the father of his country. Oh!
 Dismal reflection!—But I must endure,
 And die despis'd, a traitor to my country.
 Too credulous young man, let me dissuade
 Any to purchase with a doom like mine

Book
 IX.

V. 136—165.

This form of honour, underneath whose garb
 Despair lies hid, and all the spectre-shapes
 Of misery, to torment th' entangled soul.
 May my severe example serve to warn
 Others to shun, not imitate, my steps."

Book
 IX.

V. 166—194.

He ended; and deep gloom o'ercast his mien.
 Hianfrid, disappointed, silent rose:
 Yet other thoughts revolving, as he left
 The princely tent: for from his purpose, fear
 Of future conscious pangs deterr'd him not.
 Here failing, he revolv'd if ere he let
 Occasion slip, he safely might reveal
 His meditated hopes to some high chief
 Among the Danes, of pow'r to aid his views.
 On Oskital at length his wavering thought
 Fix'd, as most opportune, from whose fam'd wealth
 And not too scrupulous honour he might hope
 Assistance in his aim: for much he fear'd
 Lest Guthrun, proud and martial, might disdain
 Th' unwarlike proffer and reject with scorn.
 This doom'd, he bids his prompt attendant lead
 His steps to Oskital's abode: which soon
 They mark, proud-glitt'ring with majestic state.
 Announc'd, th' ambitious thane the princely dome
 Enters, not void of fear, but in his hand
 He grasp'd the snow-white flag, honour'd of all.
 Apart within his tent the gloomy King
 Lay on his couch, not yet from ghastly wounds
 Recover'd, by the arm of Alwin dealt

In single fight. Around him various dames,
 Skill'd in the cure of wounds, dispens'd their care:
 Whom strait remov'd, soon as the dynast saw
 The peaceful banner, sign of message high,
 Hianfrid to his couch approaching slow
 Opens in brief his traitorous thought, and asks,
 Should any other chief from motives wise
 Seceding to the Danish part, pursue
 Kenwulph's example, if a like reward
 Of splendor and the titled name of King
 Should crown the bold emprise. To whom with voice
 Falt'ring, as if in pain, the Dane replied.

Book

IX.

V. 195-222.

“ Not only should the chief immediate rule
 Hold over subject pow'rs: but when his aid
 Had leagued with us yet sooner to subdue
 The realm of England, and divide its spoils,
 Then should he royal dignity enjoy,
 Reigning o'er conquer'd slaves: while we would take
 Dreadful revenge on our inveterate foes.
 For I abhor the coward English, bent
 On peace and lowly arts, unworthy men.
 Me deem not by an English arm o'erpow'r'd,
 Tho' Gods averse, or fate, may late have giv'n
 A momentary triumph to my foe.
 For unrelenting, unsubdued, I mean
 Again to try his prowess, and to whelm
 In fierce destruction his short-beaming glory.”

From the proud King th' ambitious traitor turn'd

Joyful to hear his promise, yet with heart
 Appall'd with terror at his threats austere.
 Now toward Guthrun's dome th' attendant leads
 Thro' many a range of warlike tents, where bands
 Bright'ning their gory armour, or employ'd
 In rearing altars to propitious Gods,
 Gaz'd on the passing stranger with stern look,
 Yet harm'd him not. But not the selfish thane
 Thought of his captive colleagues, or desir'd
 To mark their piteous state. Soon they arrive
 The royal tent, where the majestic King
 Still occupied they find in listening strains
 Of warlike import, and each sounding lay
 Applauding as it roll'd.

Book
 IX.

V. 223—252.

Th' expectant train
 Now by Hianfrid led, whose face assum'd
 Deceitful smiles, the hostile confines leave;
 Nor their glad course delay till they arrive
 The English camp. Here soon is spread around
 The issue of their mission and the news
 Of truce obtain'd. Forthwith on ev'ry side
 The pious bands prepare funereal rites
 For their fall'n colleagues, and in hollow shields
 Bear portions of green earth to raise aloft
 Their honourable mounds. Then to the field
 Where lay the breathless warriors they proceed,
 Accompanied by ev'ry chief, and trains
 Of sacred priests array'd in spotless robes,
 And a lov'd female throng, whose beauty wore
 Th' endearing mien of sorrow. Nor delay

The active warriors o'er each fallen friend **BOOK**
 To raise his earthly monument, and place **IX.**
 Near him his blood-stain'd arms. Grief's milder sighs **V. 253—281.**
 Affectionate, and many a silent tear
 Bewail their fate. Religion's ministers
 Breathe calm to heav'n their fervent orisons,
 And near each tomb th' expected bards attune
 The songs of fame. O'er Berthun's death-cold corse,
 Lamented chief, his mournful followers rear
 A lofty mound, conspicuous o'er the plain,
 To which, the last sad obsequies perform'd,
 Bards of chief note approach, and on the harp
 Aiding the voice resound the hero's fame.

“ Mourn, mourn, ye brave: fall'n is your gallant pride;
 Berthun renown'd is fall'n; the tear humane
 Check not, that drops upon his honour'd tomb.
 Ye saw full oft, when mid the thickest fight
 His azure banner stream'd on high, and shew'd
 Amid its gold-deck'd folds the pictur'd hawk,
 Victory's sign, that call'd from far the bold
 To share high deeds of glory. Ye have seen
 When like an oak that mid the warring winds
 Smiles with uninjur'd majesty, he strove
 With hostile multitudes; lifting his shield,
 Broad as the rising moon, but as a rock
 Steadfast, behind whose mighty bulwark stood
 His dauntless pow'rs: nor thus defended, fear'd
 The roaring storm of battle, nor the waves
 Of foes on foes that as a surging sea

Came pouring on in vain. His awful sword
 Hurl'd light'nings on the foe, burning with death.
 From his red anlace fled the trembling sons
 Of Odin, and implor'd their Gods in vain.
 He darted on his prey, as from the clouds
 The broad-wing'd eagle stoops on lamb or fawn.
 While his resounding voice from far inspir'd
 His troops, as rolling to their ears it came,
 Like thunder over heav'n, but call'd their paths
 To certain vict'ry: to th' astonish'd foe
 Terrible, as the howl of wolves amid
 Wide pathless forests, when at night they bay
 The shudd'ring moon. His glaring hauberk drove
 Impatient squadrons, as before the gale
 Autumnal fly the wither'd leaves; dispers'd
 As insects sporting in the beams of noon.
 But fallen is their terror. Hark, ev'n now
 Exultingly they shout.—“ Abandon fear;
 On, on to battle! Berthun is no more!”—
 Ah! mournful is that sound—he is no more!—
 Yet his example still survives to rouse
 The sons of glory to majestic deeds.
 Amid the secret vale his beauteous wife
 Pines as a solitary flow'r, whose stem
 Unpitying winds have stript of all its bloom.
 She mourns her tender husband lost, whose love
 Shed soothing influence o'er his happy home,
 As the soft moon-beams cheer the whispering vale.
 Yet from that home forlorn ere long shall spring
 Another stock. His infant son shall hear

BOOK
 IX.

V. 282—312.

Joyful his father's fame, and emulate
 His noble deeds. Grieve not, afflicted fair,
 And you, ye sons of valour, cease to mourn.
 For in his country's cause the hero died,
 And tho' from earth remov'd, shall sure enjoy
 His meet reward of bliss in heav'n, amid
 The bosom of the gen'rous and the good."

Book
 IX.

V. 313—340.

While thus were occupied the fervent bands,
 Amid the plain the monarch-warrior pass'd,
 Indulging, as he rov'd pensive and slow,
 Sublimier thought. In strong emotion rapt,
 His mighty mind ponder'd the heav'n-chang'd state
 Of his fall'n friends: the awful attributes
 Of man's immortal soul: silent revolv'd
 His own immense designs, yet immature,
 And, wond'ring, own'd the maze of Providence
 That ever out of evil perfects good.
 Yet oft the King with meek humility
 And winning condescension would address
 The lowest of his soldiers, whom if known
 A worthy man, the duties of his place
 Performing well, he honour'd as a friend
 And fellow-warrior. Oft the tranced mind
 Of list'ning multitudes he would inspire
 To solemn hope of future heav'nly bliss.
 And while themselves surviv'd, that they should see
 Won for their country peace and happiness.

" Banish despair, (the royal chief would say)

And bear in mind that without evil mix'd
 Nothing or good or great is giv'n to man.
 This earthly scene is but a transient stage
 Of trial, that for nobler, better life
 Prepares us, if we cherish virtuous deeds.
 The friends whose loss we mourn, fall'n in the cause,
 Of their dear country, liberty and heav'n,
 Are but before us gone to share rewards
 Of heav'nly happiness. Toil, pain, and care,
 Are doom'd on earth the price by which we gain,
 And must preserve, whatever dear we hold
 Or prize as estimable, so to train
 And exercise our lives in patient virtue.
 Each has his part assign'd, to ev'ry man
 His proper duties giv'n, and ev'ry man
 Obedient, good, wins in this glorious cause
 Immortal honour: and from earth remov'd,
 If by these feelings led, shall sure obtain
 Communion meet in heav'n with those bright trains
 Of faithful angels, who in virtue tried,
 Glide thro' the worlds of light in perfect bliss.
 These from above men's weak contentions eye
 Averse, or with superior looks of pity,
 As knowing all but creatures of one kind,
 Bound on one journey to an earthly grave,
 Yet meant for various scenes of happiness,
 Or misery, as on earth their various works
 Have fitted them to rank in either state.
 Then cherish hope: heav'n sure must be our friend,
 Since 'tis for heav'n we fight; and with its aid,

BOOK
 IX.

V. 341—371.

We yet shall live to see our country's weal
 By our own toils atchiev'd, and all our hopes
 With ample consummation crown'd. Be firm,
 Be brave, as wont. Life kept for misery
 And foul dishonour sure is nothing worth.
 Lost in the cause of virtue, it remains
 The noble price of victory and the bliss
 Of England and your sons to latest time."

BOOK
 IX.

V. 372—400.

Thus wan'd the hours, till now the soften'd light
 Of evening ting'd with gold the dewy air.
 Nor less among the Danes religious zeal
 For ev'ry fallen hero fram'd a tomb.
 Wide o'er the plain, directing pious rites,
 The chieftains stray. In lofty mounds are laid
 The breathless warriors, in their armour clad,
 And near them shield and spear repos'd. Full oft
 Within the stiffen'd hand is plac'd a cup
 Gold-tipt, triumphant guerdon from the crest
 Torn of a conquer'd foe, which they may lift
 With honour in Valhalla's festive halls.
 The sacred priests attend around, and loud
 Invoke th' almighty Odin to defend
 These graves by holy tomb-fires hovering near
 From sacrilegious rapine. Obsequies
 Of solemn pomp inhume the last remains
 Of Frena, fallen chief. His stern-look'd pow'rs
 First on a rising mount, from far beheld,
 Heap a tall mass of earth: then in its womb
 They place their leader's honour'd corse: around

A silent multitude admiring stands,
 Thro' whose thick throng with wonted pomp is led
 The buried hero's war-horse, in array
 Of battle rich-caparison'd. Beside
 The lofty mound they lead him : then approach
 The priests, who lifting their fix'd eyes to heav'n,
 And uttering to the Gods mysterious pray'rs,
 Plunge in his heart the knife of sacrifice.
 Prostrate on earth, the bleeding steed they lift
 Near his dead master ; and around them place
 Armour, and ornaments of gold, and cups
 Won from the scalps of fallen foes, to grace
 Their splendid entrance into Odin's courts.
 Clos'd the huge sepulchre, the bards advance,
 And to the sounding harp attune the song
 Of fame, in memory of the hero dead.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 401—429.

“ Awake, immortal melodies : float soft,
 Ye heav'nward breezes, let the tide of song
 Roll on your wings a mighty warrior's praise.
 Frena, the great, the pow'rful, borne on high
 Beyond the summit of heav'n's arched bridge,
 Enters Valhalla's mansions. He in fight
 Fell sword in hand, nor left in vain the hills
 And pine-clad precipices, where he held
 Kingly dominion, ere his thronging ships
 Bore his collected pow'rs to England's shores.
 But peace and calm content could never hold
 His noble spirit confin'd. With pow'r and rage
 Terrible as Niord, when his vast voice

Bids the dark-swelling ocean scale the stars
 And calls the frightened Gods, he furious came
 To seek his foes. Omnipotent as Thor
 Who in his hand the blasting thunder sways
 That vollying shakes the skies, the hero burst
 Upon th' astonish'd land. Along the beach
 Stood his collected host, sublime as tow'rs,
 In armour brilliant as the palaces
 Of Odin, roof'd with golden shields. They pour'd
 O'er all the plains, tremendous as the snow
 That from four corners of the world shall rush
 At once, and darken heav'n, the destin'd sign
 Of that tremendous time arriv'd, when Gods
 Must yield to ruin. Then their monarch led
 Burning in flamy steel, and to the view
 Seem'd Surtur, horrid King, when he shall head
 From mid their world of fire the giants huge
 Of Muspelsheim, blazing in sun-bright ranks,
 Against his foes th' impetuous hero drove,
 Fierce as a meteor sallies o'er the sky,
 When ev'ry sea-wave glares with lurid light,
 He sat upon his steed, brilliant as day,
 The son of night, who on his shining horse
 Rides o'er the world and from his splendid mane
 Shakes radiance. In amaze his pow'rless foes
 Stood palsied, and beheld his rushing pow'rs
 Terrific, deathful, as the gulfy jaws
 Of Niflheim's dark abode, where rivers roll
 Anguish, and tempest, and perdition. These
 Drove on with clamour, furious as the winds

Roar thro' the mountain caverns that alarm
 The trembling savage in his inmost den.
 Beneath the mighty chief's resistless arm
 Fell his proud foes, as from Norwegian hills
 By tempests torn, blown from the thund'ring deep,
 Riv'n crags descend, heap'd high with ice-bound snow.
 Amid the fight he rag'd with awful voice
 Loudly resounding, as the northern seas
 Roar mid opposing isles and shake the tow'rs
 Of Odin's stately city and the woods
 Of ancient Funen. Scatter'd legions fled
 Confus'd along the plain, as when in storms
 Collected navies, borne on mountainous waves,
 Soar o'er the main, till whelm'd on rocks and shoals
 Their floating fragments spread the surge afar.
 Amid the bloody torrents stalk'd the chief,
 Disdaining death, till his last hour arriv'd,
 He, by the Valkyries exulting mark'd.
 For honourable fate, fell as a rock
 That overbrows the deep, by rushing tides
 Long undermin'd, with horrible uproar
 Sinks 'mid the swelling ocean. Death to him
 Delicious came, extatic as the love
 Of the chaste virgin, when with eager arms
 After some hard-fought day she to her breast
 Receives her gallant hero, and her eyes
 Beaming blue lustre, gazing fondness, speak
 Her silent transport. Boundless shall his fame
 For ages last, extensive as the glance
 Of Odin from his throne, when he surveys

Book

IX.

V. 460—489.

All worlds: yet fairer than the ev'ning star,
 Who ere approaching night ascends the skies
 On her dew-shedding steed, thro' soft-hued trees
 Pours her mild beams serene. Immortal song
 Shall still renew his name, as the green pine
 Waves his fresh branches in the show'r of spring.
 Nor here shall end his glory. Vying bards
 In presence of heav'n's King shall sound his deeds,
 Unceasing, thro' Valhalla's courts gold-pav'd."

Book
 IX.

V. 490—518.

Conspicuous near the tomb, the monarch-chief
 Stood, and with joy listen'd the song of praise
 Tun'd to the memory of a much-lov'd friend,
 Fallen in war. Now o'er the busy plain
 The thronging multitudes advance, and raise
 Aloft with mighty labour pond'rous stones,
 Monuments of the fight, whose pillar'd bulk
 Might to the passing trav'ler long recall
 The scene of blood, and point the warrior's graves.
 On ev'ry hand the sov'reign gen'ral moves,
 Inspiring solemn ardour, for he spoke,
 Where'er he pass'd, of never-ending fame,
 Glory, and rich dominion to be won
 On earth by toils like these, and after death
 Eternal bliss in heav'n, the bright reward
 Of valour, tried amid the bloody field.
 That England's total realm should own them Lords:
 When banishing ignoble peace, and arts
 Unworthy heroes, war, unceasing war,
 Should flourish thro' the land, the certain gate

Opening admission into Odin's halls :
 Nor ample spoil should fail : these fertile fields
 Should yield exhaustless plenty : well exchang'd
 For icy hills, and savage-haunted woods.
 While in that mean religion's room, profess'd
 By their blind foes, their own bold faith should claim
 All men as votaries, and should uplift
 Proud altars to their Gods on ev'ry plain.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 319—346.

Now o'er the cope of heav'n soft-winged night
 Had drawn her starry veil, and shades obscure
 Declin'd upon the earth. The scene of fight
 The warriors leave, and thro' the gen'ral camp
 Prepare the feast. The chiefs convene, as wont,
 Within their sov'reign's tent, and there partake
 Around his festal board princely regale.
 The flesh of deer, and oxen ta'en in spoil,
 Steams plenteous o'er the table. Virgins hand
 To ev'ry hero the deep-curved horn,
 Inlaid with gold, or skull of spotless white,
 Fill'd with rich mead. Proceeds the splendid feast,
 While bards with warlike song inspire the hope
 Of never-with'ring fame. Converse ensues,
 While each his thought proposes for th' array
 Of future fields, and chiefs debating form
 Their coming plans, by morn to be review'd
 In solemn council, and as wont confirm'd.

Swift flew the hours, till o'er the silent world
 Night held her mid dominion. All retire

To their dark-curtain'd domes, seeking repose.
 But Guthrun, press'd with sorrow, and intent
 On lofty meditations, sleepless sat
 Awhile within his tent: then pass'd unseen
 O'er the dim field of death, till he approach'd
 Alone and pensive the high-shadowing tomb
 Of Frena, fallen King. Awhile he stood
 Silent beside the grave. Awful appear'd
 The scene around. Now was the dreary time,
 The dead of night, when swift the flitting stars
 Shot o'er the troubled sky. Uncertain clouds
 Roll'd dark before the moon, whose shadows huge
 Mov'd slow along the earth. The wolf's deep howl
 Sounded from far. Hollow the dismal wind
 Moan'd thro' the waving woods. The boding owl
 Flapp'd by, and to the startled thought gave sign
 That now the hour had rule, when spirits of night
 Roam o'er the world, on various doom of evil
 Charg'd to mankind. Fronting the charmed north
 The monarch stood, and solemn with his spear
 Touch'd the new tomb. Heav'nward he rais'd his face,
 Dim-seen beneath his helm. The moon-beams shew'd
 O'er his stern features an unusual tint
 Of paleness spread, that spoke the lab'ring mind
 Inrapt in earnest thought. Whom thus intent
 The demon pow'rs observ'd, not without awe
 Mov'd at his mien. They recollecting strait
 Their former purpose, instantly concert
 Fulfillment of their deep designs.

Book

IX.

V. 547—576.

The King

Swelling with high emotion vents his pray'r.

Book
IX.

V. 577—605.

" Ghost of departed Frena, friend belov'd,
Whether thy soul yet hovers o'er this earth,
Or seated near the throne of Valhall's King
Enjoys sublime pre-eminence, my voice
Invokes thee. By thy fame in songs of bards
Eternally inroll'd, by thy high place
Won in the ranks of heav'n's inhabitants,
By all the bodies of thy countrymen
Slain upon England's plains, by Odin's love,
By the dark gates of hell, thee I adjure.
Hear me, oh! hear. Be it thy holy care
In ev'ry scene of death to watch the host
Bereft of thee. Them to the favouring love
Of ev'ry God commend, but to the God
Of battle chief, that never fear may taint
One Danish heart, but to the combat all
May rush, disdaining death, and sword in hand
Fall in the blood-drench'd field, each in his hour;
Mark'd by the watchful Valkyries. Whence all
Shall in due time enjoy communion proud
With thee and noblest heroes, and partake
In presence of heav'n's King extatic feasts;
Drinking rich mead from skulls of fallen foes:
Till by celestial battles long matur'd
For nobler enterprizes, they aspire
From her original enemies to guard
Assailed nature, and when worlds shall sink
In final ruin, for reward to win

Gimle's abodes, and never-ending joys."—

Book
IX.

V. 606—632.

Instant slow-rolling o'er the lofty tomb,
Thick clouds descend: amid whose meteor-fires
Pale-flashing, dim appears a shadowy shape,
Of awful view: formless and dark, it seems
To the bewilder'd gaze a being arm'd
Obscure with mighty shield, bedropp'd with blood.
Near its vast, transient limbs appears to rise
A spear, and as at times the winds upraise
Its flaky locks, to sight is slow reveal'd
A death-pale visage, wearing like the looks
Of Frena, when alive. The moon scarce shed
Her beams on the dread image. In its shades
It stood, and bending forth its fleeting arm,
A moment glanc'd upon the earth its eyes
Livid, like stars that fading quit the night.
At last a hollow voice thus broke the air.

"I hear thee, mighty King; and tho' my spirit
Now holds converse with heav'nly beings, mark
Thy pray'r. The Gods with favor thee behold.
Be firm; prepare; for hark! I tell thee now,
That won to share thy glorious enterprize,
Ere to Valhalla's glitt'ring halls I fly,
A God will deign to speak with mortal man."

So saying, swiftly vanish'd as to air
The dreadful shape. Amid expanding light
Sublimar visions on the sight arose.

A stupefactive trance o'erpow'r'd each sense
 Of the awe-wilder'd King, as fix'd he stood,
 Meekly adoring, while the veil of night,
 Withdrawn, amid the open'd air display'd
 To his enlighten'd eyes the pomp of Gods
 Preparing to depart to Valhall's courts.
 Conspicuous, arm'd in steel, with clashing noise
 The God of war came striding over clouds,
 A pillar huge of fire; likest a storm
 O'ershadowing heav'n, pregnant with sulphurous flame.
 His golden shield beam'd like the setting sun.
 His dreadful sword was in his hand: his look
 Might wither armies; and upon his crest
 Death sat, too terrible to view. Around them throng'd
 Valkyries arm'd: and chariots bright and steeds
 Innumerable waited near, that bore alike
 Celestial shapes, or fill'd with hosts of slain.
 Tyr, God of single fight, scarce curb'd awhile
 Th' impatient tygers, ready now for flight,
 That bore the chariot of heav'n's mighty King.
 Approach'd the OMNIPOTENT, until he stood
 Near the prostrated chief, to whose rapt ears
 These awful words like bursting thunder roll'd.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 633—661.

“ Hail, Guthrun: fear not: thine heroic deeds
 Odin approves, and seconds thy designs.
 Thee in my favor high I hold. Come then:
 Enjoy a glorious meed, to living man
 Yet never granted. Tow'rd heav'n's glitt'ring coasts
 Ev'n now I part with my celestial train,

Bearing from earth my prize of heroes fall'n,
 Grasping their swords in the last bloody fight.
 Ascend with us : for thou shalt now receive
 Ocular proof : that taught thou may'st inspire
 Thy countrymen, and to their sense relate
 All thou shalt see, all that for ev'ry man
 Bold in the cause of valour is prepar'd.
 Fear not : unharm'd thou shalt to earth return,
 Ere the first glance of early morning shine.
 And in Valhalla's courts I will present
 To thy delighted hand heav'n-temper'd arms,
 With which in future fields thou may'st contend
 Invincible, and all thy mighty aims
 Accomplish.—Rise—leap to thy feet erect."

**Book
IX.**

V. 662—690.

So saying, the God with his protruded sword
 Touch'd the prone chief : a sudden rapture thrill'd
 Thro' all his limbs, of earth unborn. His frame
 Seem'd all-intranc'd. Led by the Deity,
 He to a lofty chariot sprang ; whose reins
 Th' intrepid Tyr swift-seiz'd and to his seat
 Ascended proud, all-arm'd in radiant brass,
 That loud-resounded as beside the chief
 He took his place.

Wing'd steeds display'd abroad
 Their vans, awaiting signal to depart :
 While all the bright procession in array
 Marshal their awful pomp, ready alike
 For their celestial voyage. Round the scene
 Th' intranced monarch cast his eyes, and saw

The shadowy form of Frena tow'rd the car
 Ascend of Odin, where in crowds appear
 The ghosts of warriors, bloody, pale, each shape
 And visage in the troubled memory
 Fresh of the Danish chief: for all had late
 Follow'd him to the field of death. Where'er
 He look'd, each heav'nly being seem'd to bear
 On steed or car heroic shapes, their swords
 Gore-red, dim-gleaming thro' a veil of clouds.
 Soon to his throne sublime heav'n's King advanc'd,
 And with his flamy sword, like thunder, smote
 His shield, the sign for his throng'd host to move.
 All strait obey: and urge their transient course
 Thro' the mid air: in order due they sail
 Wide o'er the skies ascending, and below
 Survey the countries of the various earth
 Swiftly recede, as over each they pass:
 Th' amazed monarch of his partner God
 Enquires.

Book
 IX.

V. 691—720.

“ In what dominion of the world
 First shall we hail the fiery bridge of heav'n ?”
 To whom benign the God. “ Wait but awhile:
 Soon o'er the middle of the earth high-rais'd,
 Above Asgard's proud fortress, 'mid whose tow'rs
 Frequent the Gods descend and thro' the air
 Perform their various errands, we shall view
 The burning arch that to the realms of light
 Leads up direct.” He scarce had spoke, when lo!
 Beaming before their eyes from either end
 Of heav'n in vast expanse a colour'd bow

Rose high, that as they nearer drew admiring
 Seem'd all construct of solid fire: from far
 Rainbow in aspect, such as mortal men
 Behold when show'ry clouds oppose the sun,
 Now its contiguous frame to sight display'd
 Divinest art, which of concentrated flames
 Had wrought a massy bridge, the glitt'ring road
 For Gods 'twixt heav'n and earth to pass at will.
 Under its radiant vault a thousand hosts
 Rushing conjunct to battle might have mov'd
 With order undisturb'd.

Book
 IX.

V. 721—736.

Aloft wide-blaz'd
 Near the broad confines of apparent heav'n
 A fortress huge, built on the dazzling arch,
 With tow'rs sublime, impenetrable, vast,
 And ev'ry martial work by art of Gods
 Thro' many an age invented for defence.
 Th' enraptur'd chieftain much the work admir'd,
 As on the frame superb he fix'd his gaze,
 When thus his high companion. "Yon bright fort
 Whose warlike structure so attracts thy view
 Is Heimdall's vast abode, the Sentry-God,
 Whose sacred charge is, as thou know'st, to guard
 Heav'n's entrance from th' assaults of mighty foes,
 Oft sallying from their worlds beneath, in hope
 To storm her mansions ere their destin'd time
 He knows their pow'r, and mindful of surprize
 Sleeps less than birds that guard their young: he looks
 A hundred leagues around: and lifts on high
 A trumpet, whose vast roar sounds thro' all worlds.

But neither this stupendous bridge, nor aught
 Strong or terrific in yon fort inclos'd,
 Nor substance thro' all nature, must intend
 Resistance, on that last tremendous day,
 Twilight of Gods, when Loke's fell progeny,
 And all the sons of Muspell's fiery world,
 By Surtur led, leagued with the giant host
 Troop'd from aerial deeps, shall o'er the earth
 Burst in wide flaming ranks, and this huge arch
 Crushing beneath their weight, invade heav'n's tow'rs:
 While Gods and hosts of Heroes numberless
 Shall strive in vain to ward destructive fires,
 Hurl'd over all Creation."

" Awful time !

Return'd th' attentive monarch," " well may then
 Th' Almighty Father to his blest abodes
 Lift, and inure to battle, heroes tried
 In valour, to contend with foes like these !"

Thus as they talk, the gorgeous pomp ascends
 The broad and gold-bright road, resplendent more
 Than that fair starry way in heav'n, surnam'd
 The Galaxy : and past the fort divine
 Moves in long train. The conscious Deity,
 Who there held residence, the passing state
 Honours with blasts of sounding alchemy
 That shake the basis of heav'n's vaulted bridge;
 Till near its centre now arriv'd, behold !
 Th' amazing prospect from below unfolds
 Full on the view. The hero lost in awe

Gaz'd downward, while his prompt associate shew'd
 With pointing hand the system of the worlds,
 Visible thence. Beneath the central arch
 A mighty citadel deep-reach'd, until
 It touch'd the middle of the earth, outstretch'd
 Below in various prospect, which appear'd
 A pond'rous globe, within a vast abyss
 Floating of serene air, and girt with seas.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 780—808.

“ That is the citadel of Gods,” exclaim'd
 The heav'nly shape, “ Asgard its name, whence oft
 They issue thro' the air, and o'er the earth,
 Bent on good offices to man. But mark!
 Where betwixt earth and heav'n, the dark-brow'd night
 Sails on her shadowy car, drawn by her steed
 Rimfaxé, from whose mane and foamy bit
 Hoar-frost and dews drop o'er the earth. The moon,
 Within his variable chariot thron'd,
 Waits on her pomp, with all yon train of stars.
 These first speed round the world. Day follows next,
 Celestial child of Night, whose fulgent state
 Skinfaxé draws, fair steed, that waves abroad
 His golden mane, illumining the air
 And all the earth. Yonder thou may'st discern
 Their confines, chang'd with light and dark. The sun
 Thron'd in her chariot, work of Odin's hand,
 Attends Day's moving splendor. Swiftly fly
 Both sun and moon, endanger'd still, for foes
 Pursue them ever, wolf-like shapes, that seek
 Them to devour, their prey, and sometimes reach

Each tardier light. Then struggles fierce ensue,
 As thou hast seen, which to the darken'd world
 Cause those dread eclipses, when conscious men
 Strive with deep noise and clamours to affright
 The monsters from their grasp.—Cast now thine eyes
 Afar beyond the north of earth's broad globe.—
 Yon darkly-gleaming, rocky, ice-heap'd piles,
 That seen at times amid tempestuous air
 Frown on the brink of night, are Niflheim's world,
 Th' abodes of woe and death, where Hela holds
 Hideous dominion, and dark rivers roll
 Poison, and tears of coward men, who there
 Eternal-tortur'd float.—Now thwart th' abyss
 Carry thy vast survey, far past the south
 Of the terrestrial ball. Yon lurid fires
 That redd'ning glare amid dim-clouded space
 Shew Muspelsheim's dread world, where Surtur rules
 His giant-legions thro' vast realms of flame,
 Their armour and their element, to Gods
 Awfullest adversaries.—All between
 These distant worlds, lies an immense abyss
 Of calm and serene air, in which hangs pois'd
 Earth's globe, the vessel of the ages, built
 By pow'r divine of old. Thro' such expanse
 Aërial, dwell the giants of the frost,
 Who there roam unconfin'd, and proud construct
 A ship, which on the last dread day their chief
 Rymer shall steer upon earth's ocean, swell'd
 In storming deluge over all her climes
 By the huge serpent there inclos'd, whom Fate

Book
 IX.

V. 809—838.

Shall then to a terrific spectre change,
 Joining heav'n's congregated enemies.—
 Hence, as thou see'st, we gain a shadowy glimpse
 Of nature's various worlds; but our faint view
 Holds no compare with Odin's clear survey,
 When in his heav'nly city 'bove our heads
 High-rais'd upon his blazing throne, he eyes
 Creation through, and marks the various works
 Of all its habitants.—That city soon
 And proud monarchal throne we shall behold."

BOOK
 IX.

V. 339—367.

So as he spoke, th' ascending state had reach'd
 The climes of heav'n, while the translated chief
 Perceiv'd around irradiate air, that breath'd
 Extatic influence: and his eye was seiz'd
 With prospect of unutterable glories
 On ev'ry hand. A city first they pass
 Close on the frontiers, where the fiery arch
 Pontifical conjoins those beamy realms,
 And mark admiring its huge garrison,
 Gleaming of solid steel: which soon the God
 Announc'd as Himinborg's aspiring tow'rs.
 But these scarce held their view: for now arose
 On the rapt sight, sublime in fields of air,
 A far-refulgent city, o'er Asgard
 Vertical and the earth, its gorgeous frame
 Built of pure silver, and uplift displaying
 Imperial palaces with golden shields
 All-roof'd. Superb-exalted in the midst,
 Magnificence all other far surpass'd

(That else had shone pre-eminent) a throne
 Of blood-red columns rais'd, with arched dome
 High-overhung, more dazzling than the sun
 Setting at eve amid the crimson waves.
 Might seem that all heav'n's riches were profus'd
 O'er this triumphant glory. Sov'ran pow'r
 Blaz'd in its aspect, and bespoke the God
 Who there dispens'd dominion. Nor the chief
 Waited to hear this as the throne announc'd
 Of heav'n's high King, which its own pomp proclaim'd.
 He knew the Godlike structure, and with awe
 Hail'd Lidskialfa, fam'd on earth, there call'd
 Terror of nations: and the city knew
 Valaskialf, of Odin lov'd abode.
 Which pass'd, far spread on either hand he sees
 Many celestial cities, wanting none
 Majestic garrisons. In each appear'd
 Beings of shape divine, who thronging came,
 To mark the proud procession, as it pass'd
 Thro' heav'n's wide regions. Alfheim's tow'ring walls
 They pass, abodes of glorious essences,
 Bright as the rays of noon. Breidablik next
 For beauty fam'd they mark, where Balder holds
 His kingly palaces, the radiant son
 Of Odin, prime in eloquence and grace;
 O'er whose cerulean pillars were inscrib'd
 Verses that fervent-utter'd could recall
 The dead to life. Next Glitner's flame-hued spires
 They in their course approach, whose mansions all
 Beam'd of pure gold, with silver roof'd, where held

Forseté, Balder's son, his splendid courts,
 Ever employ'd to reconcile disputes
 Of Gods or heroes. Now their pomp arrives
 That holy city, capital of heav'n,
 Where all the Gods hold residence, each day
 Hither resorting on fleet steeds or cars,
 With purpose to consult on nature's works
 And the decrees of fate. All glories here
 August were met : empyreal courts, and domes
 Enshrin'd with regal ornament, adapt
 For heav'n's potential governors. Advance
 Full thro' the midst of this metropolis
 The stranger cars, and cross the central plain,
 Ida surnam'd of Gods, on which appears
 The hall magnificent of purest gold,
 Where twelve deputed judges daily sit
 Around a throne rais'd for heav'n's puissant King
 On lofty seats, deliberating there
 Celestial government, and to dispense
 Justice to Gods and men. In this fair clime
 They mark the Goddess-mansion, Vinglod nam'd,
 Abode of love and friendship. Beams around
 Each shape to female beauty dear ; and grace
 Still-varying charms the gaze. Immortal flow'rs
 Bloom all in sight. Music usurps the air :
 Doves sit on bowers, bending with nectar'd fruits,
 Cooing their notes of love to melody
 Of other warbling birds that deck the groves,
 Or swan-like sail on silv'ry lakes, whose breast
 Reflected grandeur blent with rural scenes.

Book

IX.

v. 898—937.

Here stands the palace of heav'n's matchless Queen,
 Goddess of love and beauty; long surnam'd
 By the celestials, "union of the world."
 Near which proud seat, attracted next the view
 The artists' glitt'ring hall, dear to the Gods,
 Where furnaces wide-blaz'd, and anvils rung,
 And sounding hammers, with all instruments
 Meet for the forge: for here fam'd artizans
 Wrought for the Gods in gold, or brilliant stone,
 Or polish'd wood, armour, and chariots rich,
 And ev'ry work apt for the field or dome.
 Now first with rapt amaze the Danish King,
 Whose sense yet other wonders had absorb'd,
 Perceives aloft a tree immense, whose arms
 Wide-branching overhead, roof beyond sight,
 As with a verd'rous canopy, all heav'n,
 With all her cities, ev'n the fulgent throne
 Of Odin, thence conspicuous. Strait his thought
 Remembers that fame-honour'd Ash, by bards
 On earth nam'd Hydrasil, with holiest awe
 Ever express'd, whose triple-parted root
 O'er heav'n, o'er Niflheim's world, and o'er the earth
 Was sung diffus'd. To his admiring look
 His Partner-God yields answering speech, and tells
 That this is that transcendent, awful tree,
 Shadow or image of Eternity,
 Or Pow'r Supreme, omniscient, yet unknown,
 Which in its vast embrace contains all heav'n
 With all her continents, and Gods, and men:
 One root fix'd here, another over earth

Book
 IX.

V. 928—937.

Extending downward thro' the vast abyss,
 Under which second root deep-hidden springs
 The fount of truth and wisdom, and the last
 Wide-spreading root borne over Niflheim's world,
 Shadowing the realms of death, where coward men
 Are punish'd everlastingly.

Book
 IX.

V. 958—987.

Deep-felt

Astonishment inraps the lab'ring mind
 Of Guthrun, pond'ring such supernal pow'r.—
 To join the bright procession on its way
 Tow'rd Valhall's palaces, the Gods now throng,
 And Goddess-train from out their starry homes.
 These leaving strait their orient capital
 Pass near its confines a wide-salient spring,
 The fountain of time-past, upon whose brink
 Shines a superb and much rever'd abode
 Dwelt by the Fates, three sister-virgins, nam'd
 Past, Present, and Future, who from this fount
 Draw water, and to ev'ry man dispense
 His destiny and age; to some men good,
 To others evil: whence these pow'rs may well
 From men claim admiration high and pray'rs.
 The King had heard their station, and ador'd
 Their attributes. His sociate Deity
 Tells now, that intervening object none
 Will stay their course, ere they arrive the fields
 For battle destin'd, spread around the tow'rs
 Of Valhall, beaming far. Joy all his frame
 Pervaded, that so soon he should behold
 Th' assembled heroes, during many an age

Translated into heav'n.

Book
IX.

Strait they perceive

Green champains, wide-outspread, teeming with flow'rs V. 908—1017.
 And richest herbs, blood-fed: for these the plains
 Were to the King display'd, where in array
 Of martial splendor from Valhalla's courts
 Effus'd, innumerable heroes mix
 Each day in fight, and all the storm of war
 Provoke, till evening's shade, when all the dead
 Rise up unhurt, and back to their wide domes
 March to partake luxurious feasts, and quaff
 Mead from the skulls of foes, o'erpow'r'd on earth.
 Across these spacious scenes th' advancing pomp
 Proceeds, and strown around on ev'ry hand
 Perceives celestial armour, shields and spears
 In conflict riv'n, and many a vestige plain
 Of furious carnage, there atchiev'd.

At length

Appear Valhalla's glories. From afar
 Innumerable gates blaze on the sight,
 Likest the purple doors whence on the world
 Aurora from the chambers of the east
 Lets out the sun. Tow'rs, columns, monuments,
 Flaming with orient radiance to the clouds
 Rise, and o'er each victorious trophies, plum'd
 Standards, and kingly tufas, and ensigns
 With gems or crescents all anneal'd, and wove
 With tissued light, in rich expansion wave,
 Whose silv'ry wings create a beamy heav'n,
 More splendid than when Hesperus leads on

His starry host. At sight of which, his shield
 Th' Almighty Father strikes, whose awful roar
 Announc'd, as wont, his proud approach, while all
 The new heav'n-wafted ghosts upsent a shriek
 Of eager acclamation to behold
 Their future blissful home. Skill'd in the sign,
 Forth from Valhalla's courts thro' countless gates
 The hosts of conscious warriors rush to meet
 With seemly state heav'n's mighty King, all cas'd
 In wide-resplendent arms on plumed steeds
 Caparison'd in gold, in numbers more
 Unnumber'd, than the ocean waves that rise
 Successive-dancing in the rays of morn.
 Trumpets resounding, and the neigh of steeds
 Deafen with warlike noise the air, while all
 The gorgeous pageantry in union vast
 Enters superb pavilions, pav'd with stars,
 Whose cieling, of refulgent shields compact,
 Within its ample skyey-vaulted cope
 Held thrones innumerable and order'd seats
 Of sapphire or of crystal, but more rich
 Than eastern Sultan spreads, when wond'ring realms
 Behold his regal state display profus'd
 All India's gather'd wealth.
 To solemn seats
 Approach the whole procession in array;
 While all the stranger ghosts with honour due
 Are led by Deities to lofty thrones.
 Th' all-beauteous Freya and the Valkyries
 Place in conspicuous range her boasted half,

Book
 IX.

V. 1018—1047.

Borne from the field of death. Then heav'n's high King Book
 In sight of all th' assembly tow'rd the midst IX.
 Leads Guthrun's tranced frame, and him to all V. 1048—1076.
 By name announces, as a mighty chief,
 Of heav'n high-favor'd, and enjoying now
 Honours to living man yet never shewn;
 Translated before death to view th' abodes
 Of blissful heroes, whom his wars on earth
 Shall soon increase with many a legion, fall'n
 In bloody fight. For his victorious arms
 Shall soon a broad and fertile isle subdue,
 Albion far-fam'd, and o'er her gore-fed plains
 Raise warlike altars to admiring Gods,
 Till the dread twilight come, ending all worlds.

All hail the chieftain, and with ardent look
 Survey him, high-applauded. Extacy
 Thrill'd thro' his ev'ry sense, and in his eyes
 Sparkled delight, as mid the joyous host
 He mark'd full many a warrior-shape, on earth
 Once known in fields of fame, now on whose helms
 Shone diadems, their valour's meed. Him soon
 A former Danish King, his country's boast,
 Of bards the darling theme, himself a son
 Of song, whose crowded ships had o'er the main
 Spread terror, and with slaughter died each shore,
 Regner, great name, approach'd, and by the hand
 (Himself announcing) seiz'd the awe-struck chief—
 Communing with him strait, the death-chang'd King
 Relates, that ere his earthly life expir'd,

Himself had felt the glorious hope to win
 With sword and fire England's all-beauteous realms,
 Fairest of isles, and lay her people low,
 Food for the wolves and eagles, till the land
 For Odin had become the favor'd seat,
 Perpetual scene of wars, but England's King
 Ælla, a foe of savage cruelty,
 There held him captive, and by serpent stings
 At last assail'd his life. There he had learnt
 Fate govern'd all things, and to him forbade
 A glory, sole reserv'd by destiny
 And will of Gods for Guthrun, honour'd name,
 Who these high acts atchieving, should at length
 Fall mid the storm of fight, and soon partake
 Valhalla's glories, which to win, no pangs,
 No earthly suff'rings, were too hard to dure.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 1077—1106.

High swell'd the living monarch's soul to hear
 These words transporting, and in all his thoughts
 Conquest then seem'd presag'd; while other dead
 Obeisance due and honour to his state
 Offer around.

Meantime heav'n's awful Sire
 Ascended his empyreal seat: from whence
 He moderates the councils of the brave,
 And rules their vast assembly. Nor he seem'd
 Less than Olympian Jove, when thron'd aloft
 'Mid the celestial pow'rs, his awful brows
 Nod his unchangeable decrees, and shake
 All heav'n.

Majestic to his side he calls

The Danish monarch, and in view of all
 Takes from his treasur'd stores coruscant arms,
 Cuirass, and helm, hauberk, and pliant mail
 Divinely wrought, and to th' adoring gaze
 Expands an ostentatious shield, where art
 Had every form of warlike terror spread
 With matchless dignity. Smooth-flowing greaves
 And gauntlets next he brought, and in his grasp
 Uplifting all, to the extended arms
 Presented of the wond'ring chief, whom awe
 And extacy absorb'd, while to his ear
 This high injunction came.

Book
 IX.

V. 1107—1134.

“ Receive, bold King,
 A pledge triumphant of heav'n's high regard,
 These glorious, godlike arms, which wear on earth
 Intrepid, knowing them to mortal stroke
 Invulnerable, till that destin'd time
 When to thy conqu'ring host all England's realms
 Shall yield o'erpow'r'd, and thou and thine shall spoil
 Her rich dominions. Which great task atchiev'd,
 Remember ever thy commission'd charge
 By sword and fire t' extirpate from her soil
 Christ's despicable faith, and in its room
 Plant worship of ourselves and full belief
 Of all these blissful glories which thine eyes
 Have seen, and still shall view. Whence in due time
 Fast-spreading like a deluge from the loins
 Of the disburthen'd North, this martial faith
 Shall all the world convert, and thus embroil
 All countries, and all men, in endless wars.

For this high duty be it thy proud meed
 At last to fall amid the gory field
 Transpierc'd with wounds; thence after death to live Book
 Enroll'd in songs of bards, while borne on high IX.
 In my attendant car thy soul shall rise v. 1137—1165.
 To these blest regions, and partake these joys,
 Till heav'n's last twilight come. Then after worlds
 Have sunk in ruin, when ourselves must yield
 To our predestin'd foes, thou shalt survive
 For ever, high-remov'd to dwell amid
 Thy brave companions, fall'n on earthly fields,
 In Gimlé's boundless heav'n of light and bliss.
 But come: ere thou depart to earth, the feasts
 And wars of heroes shall delight thy stay;
 And yield a foretaste of thy future joys."

So as he spoke, harmonious music rose,
 On wings of extacy from thousand harps
 Of heav'nly minstrels: chief from Braga's shell,
 The God of song: in liquid concert join'd
 By warbling flutes. Signal not unobserv'd;
 For at the sound the vast assemblage rose,
 And mov'd in order tow'rd the festal hall
 Divine, where stretching o'er the sight appear'd
 Tables immense with ev'ry dainty spread
 Provoking appetite, and luscious mead
 Mantling in many a skull of spotless white,
 Or golden goblets, foaming broad around.
 At equal intervals a Goddess train
 Stood of fair Valkyries, waiting th' array

BOOK
IX.

V. 1166—1194.

Of mailed heroes at each sumptuous board.
All take their seats, and on a sep'rate throne
High elevate, the universal Sire
Assumes his state; whose spiritual essence needs
Sustenance none, save from th' enlivening fumes
Of heav'n-press'd wine. Swift to his lofty crest
Two ravens fly, Spirit and Memory nam'd,
Wafting the news of all things thro' the world
Passing, while he with fav'ring eye o'erlooks
The genial pleasures of his happy hosts.
These throng'd partake magnificent regale,
Delicious flesh of boars, on earth admir'd,
And quaff at large from deep capacious skulls
Won from the scalps of foes, rich-sparkling mead.
Th' admiring Guthrun all the scene observ'd
Deep-mov'd, and knew all as he heard proclaim'd
In songs of earthly bards. Nor fail'd he then
To join the splendid revelry, and taste
Celestial food, while to his honour'd hand
The Valkyries present a golden cup,
Exclaiming, " Freely drink : no surfeit fear,
Nor vacancy, for from her flowing teats
A fair she-goat high-feeding on the leaves
Of the eternal Hydrasil distils.
Each day of hydromel unfailing streams,
Copious to satisfy heav'n's endless hosts."

Mirth crown'd the lavish festival, and swift
Flew the gay time, as bards divine rehears'd
Heroic acts, and sounding music peal'd,

Till at a sign from Odin's lifted hand,
 Hark! from afar the piercing cry ascends
 Of the ferocious cock, signal of war;
 The heroes from their seats start up, and seize
 Their arms, all-hast'ning thro' unfolded gates
 To the grim fields of fight. Chariots and steeds
 Await their coming, and with martial noise
 All heav'n resounds, as thronging they advance
 In multitudinous phalanxes, led on
 Under extended banners to the roar
 Of drums and clarions, trumpets, harps, and shouts.

The passing crowds the Danish King pursues,
 Burning with eager fury to behold
 Their dread, triumphant transports, and congress
 Of their embattled legions. To his side
 Tyr joins his steps, and both together mount
 A high, refulgent chariot, whose ascent
 Commanded prospect of the champaign scene,
 Within whose concave in array were laid
 The monarch's armour, Odin's splendid gift.
 Them heav'n's almighty father in his car,
 Surrounded with celestial moving pomp,
 Accompanied: and soon their state arrives
 Th' illimitable fields, where swift array'd
 In two opposing armies, stood adverse
 The blazing wars of heav'n's translated pow'rs.
 Nor paus'd: for each innumerable host
 Fierce-rushing opposite conjoins afar
 Tremendous conflict. Thunder then gan roar

Throughout all heav'n. Then shook the solid tow'rs
 Of all her cities, and Valhalla rung
 Horrible echoes; while the boundless air
 Rain'd death, loud-shattering adamantine arms
 With dark incumbent ruin. Flaming far,
 Chariots all dash'd with gore, and steeds, and shields
 In fierce commotion mix, a moment seen,
 Till other unrestrain'd destruction whelms
 Their jarring tumult. Squadrons heap the plains,
 Delug'd with blood. Nor less confusion reigns,
 Than if the twilight of the Gods arriv'd,
 And all heav'n burst asunder, in mid air
 The constellations had together dash'd
 Their globes, and desolation roar'd thro' worlds.
 So flash'd thick fires, and sanguine torrents roll'd,
 Terrible, blasting, as those stormy flames
 And poisonous floods, which at the end of time
 Fenris by Midgard's side, (reft of their bonds),
 Shall from their jaws, wide as the gulph of hell,
 Explode o'er heav'n and earth, and deeps of air.
 Floating on dark-expanded wings aloft,
 The rav'ning vultures came in hideous clouds,
 And downward darting tore with piercing screams
 The fallen dead, the triumph so to swell
 Of victory. Endless were the feats of fame
 Atchiev'd on ev'ry hand. Astonishment
 And extacies unfelt entranc'd the soul
 Of Guthrun, at survey of such great war.
 Impatient of controul he seeks to join
 The madd'ning conflict, and appease in fight

BOOK

IX.

V. 1224—1253.

Intolerable fury. Of whose state
 Aware, his partner God (so to restrain
 His else ungovern'd rage) tells that ev'n now
 Their course must hence depart, and in the midst
 Leave this fierce war, for now is come the hour
 When tow'rd the earth th' almighty Sire had bade
 Their flight descend. The King reluctant hears,
 And griev'd, exclaims. "Oh! that predestin'd foes
 Were ever doom'd by ruthless fate to end
 Glories, and bliss, and pleasures such as these!
 Here could I ever stay! My soul exults
 To linger here, this place pronouncing good.
 Can other extacies e'er these exceed?"
 To whom the martial Tyr. "Lament not, chief,
 That so eternal destiny has doom'd,
 And that these scenes must end: for after Gods
 Yield to inevitable death, absorb'd
 Into the bosom of Omnipotence,
 The brave and bold shall ever live, and share
 Glories and bliss unknown, amid th' abodes
 Of Gimlé, of whose boundless heav'n thine eyes
 Shall, as we pass to earth, a shadowy glimpse
 Obtain, whose view shall strait thy sadd'ning mind
 Rouse to high courage and deep-fix'd resolves."

He said, and without longer pause directs
 The reins of his wing'd coursers to the south,
 While Guthrun many a fond, retorted glance
 Cast on those happy fields, and gradual mark'd
 War's fulgent aspect from the sight retire.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 1254—1292.

Till near heav'n's southern borders come, behold!
 Cerulean regions open on their gaze
 Soothing to view; which high-exalted realms
 Display'd a third, illimit heav'n above,
 From which, (conspicuous thence) the matchless shine
 Of Gimlé's glories pierc'd the azure depths
 Subjacent, and thro' those far-spreading climes
 Shed light and life and bliss. Th' extatic pow'r
 Ravish'd th' adoring passengers, and stay'd
 Awhile their fervid wheels, but Fate to them
 Conceded not more near to pierce abodes,
 As yet undwelt of mortal feet. Nor time,
 Tho' much desire invited, now allow'd
 The beatific transport long to share.
 Reluctant thence they turn: and as they bend
 Their course reverted tow'rd heav'n's glitt'ring bridge,
 The Danish King, with deep regret inspir'd,
 Still in his mind the fated enemies
 Revolves of heav'n's blest pow'rs: nor fails he then
 To his attentive guide meek to unfold
 His fix'd desire sometime, ere death, to view
 (Escorted thus by some celestial pow'r)
 The dreaded foes, where'er they dwell, dispers'd
 Throughout creation, if such hope the Gods
 Deem not profane for mortal eye. To whose
 Request so offer'd strait the martial Tyr
 Future compliance promis'd, if dissent
 Th' almighty Odin gives not. Swiftly flew
 Their buoyant voyage, till discern'd afar
 From the fair summit of the burning arch,

Book
 IX.

V. 1283—1312.

The earth unfolds her verd'rous regions, stretch'd
 In wide expanse below. Thither their speed
 Hastens, and now the chambers of the deep
 Were redd'ning with th' approach of dawn, nor yet
 The sun had from the orient waves uplift
 His golden pomp. O'er many a realm they sail,
 Swift on their airy passage caught, and light
 At last in view of well-known scenes where war
 In long procinct held residence, and camps
 Outspread their solemn state. Descending soon
 On the firm ground, the Danish monarch fits
 To his invigorated limbs the arms
 Gift of heav'n's King supreme, and sudden feels
 Within him pow'r immense and loftiest thoughts
 Disdaining sense of pain, or faint fatigue.
 In such array the hero strode along
 Tow'rd his own subject camp, full of divine
 Ardor, and bade with lifted hand adieu
 To the stern God, high-vanishing in air.

BOOK
 IX.

V. 1313—1337

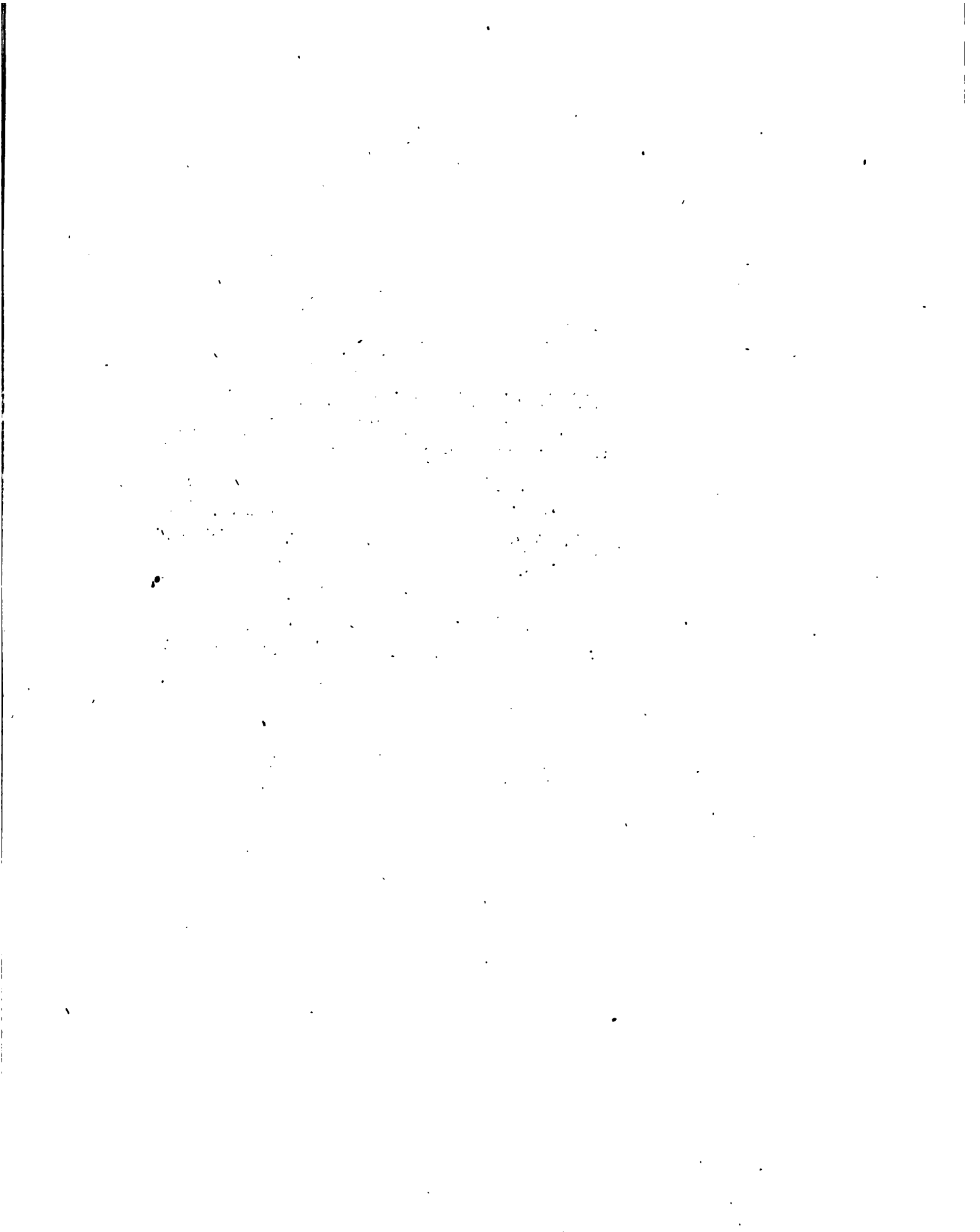
ALFRED.

BOOK X.

VERIFIED

ARGUMENT OF BOOK X.

Second general battle of the English and Danish armies. Various incidents. At length Alfred and Guthrun meet in single combat. The Pagan King loses his celestial sword. Victory inclines to the side of the English, who force their enemy's camp, and drive the Danes into Exeter. After the battle, the English females come to meet their friends. The Queen conspicuous among these with her children. The meeting of her and Alfred. The chiefs assemble in the royal tent. Festivities of the English. Council of the Demons. They determine to escort hither to the assistance of the Danes their numerous fleet now lying at Wareham. A messenger arrives to Alfred from Othel the English admiral, announcing that the Danish fleet is about to sail to Exeter: that the admiral has determined to give them battle on their passage: and solicits the presence of Alfred on board the English fleet. He resolves to go. The parting of Alfred and the Queen. To secure the safety of his family, he determines to remove them from the camp to the castle of Anselm, an English chief. Departure of the King to the fleet, and of the Queen and family to their place of retreat.



ALFRED.

BOOK X.

V. 1—19.

NOW virgin morn, attir'd in robe of pearl,
Shook dewdrops from her shadowy hand on flow'rs
Soft-opening to receive the golden rays,
Shot from the hov'ring chariot of the sun.
His broad eye from the ocean-verge beheld
Both armies, on the confines of éach camp
Preparing for fierce battle. Either host
Blaz'd far, in aspect various. Marshall'd bright
Under each chief, the English legions stood
In shapes triangular, whose lessening points
Fronted the foe, thick-serried shields along
Presenting barriers impenetrable
On ev'ry side. Proud in the van, between
Each interval, selected chivalry,
Flow'r of the southern regions, mov'd, of youths
Noble and young compos'd, their barbed steeds
Neighing for war. Deep in the rear were throng'd
The hoary ag'd, the priests, the female trains,
With ancient bards, before whose guarded ranks

Vehicles fill'd with martial treasures spread
 A moving bulwark. ~~Dreadful was the view,~~
 As all th' illumin'd air with dancing flames
 Sparkled, from crested helms and wavy spears
 And shields depict with gorgeous heraldry,
 Shook in the beams of morn. The streamy locks
 Of thousand chiefs broad-floated on the wind,
 Like meteors, over which their falchions flash'd,
 And battle-axes rose in hideous range,
 Where pale Death seem'd to glare. England's best hope,
 Her warlike sov'reign on his mantled steed
 Unwearied rode from troop to troop, and rous'd
 To union high of patriot energy
 Each gen'rous feeling. Ev'ry ducal prince
 He pass'd, addressing with meet words, of pow'r
 To fire each heart with thirst of noblest deeds
 And haughty scorn of death: he call'd to mind
 Their bleeding country's wrongs: that now the hour
 Of her deliv'rance beams at hand, a charge
 Trusted to their sole valour, and the meed
 Of vict'ry: for the fate of Englishmen
 And their sons' sons thro' many a distant age
 On this great day depends. Live only then
 To conquer, and beneath heav'n's arm, attain
 Liberty, glory, honourable peace.

Book
 X.

V. 20—48.

Oddune, the bold, a thunderbolt of war,
 Artful in stratagem, Devonian men
 Led on with answering hearts. Herbert the wise,
 Grown grey in fields of fame, his faithful pow'rs,

Choice of Dorsetian plains, compell'd, and bade
 All rather perish than their monarch's side
 Ignobly quit. Osmund was there, the good,
 The gen'rous hero, father, friend, belov'd,
 Who his selected train from Cornish fields
 Address'd: and bade them still exulting meet
 The visage of grim war, and from her front
 Pluck glorious triumph. Nor there absent far
 Shone Athelard, his son, the father's side
 Protecting with his gallant troop, whose heart
 Throbb'd high within him, as he heard the voice
 Of his dear sov'reign, and big tear-drops stood
 In his full eyes. Edric, kind chief, was near,
 Ruling the men of Hants, who garrulous
 Hearten'd his pow'rs, and bade them imitate
 His gen'rous boys, Hianfrid, and the bold
 Harold, nor following these thro' scenes of fame
 Despise an old man's prowess. Alwin here
 Ardent, impetuous, deem'd each moment lost
 Which held him from the fight. Rayner all-stern
 In his dark armour waited for the fray,
 Sparing of words, yet bade his list'ning host,
 The pride of Wilts, by deeds alone acquire
 Pre-eminence, nor bear to be excell'd.
 Oswin, as brave as loyal, with proud joy
 Receiv'd the monarch's charge, and rous'd his train
 Part from his native vales, part to his sway,
 Added since Berthun's mournful fate, to sense
 Of noblest temper. Edgar, young and bold,
 Burning for fame, invok'd his warrior-troops

Book
 X.

V. 49—78.

T' avenge his brother's death, nor ever see
 Vecta's fair isle, till, honour-crown'd, they all
 May hail their wives and pleasant homes in peace.

Book
 X.

V. 79—106.

Thus stood the host in mighty cohorts rang'd,
 Princes, earls, nobles, potent thanes, and chiefs
 Of states, of hundreds, tythings, in degrees
 Subordinate, yet leagued in triple vow
 To equal each his leader, to avenge
 Each other's fate; and victory or death
 Win on the field of blood. These in array
 Shone like the stars of heav'n, whose glorious trains
 Each in his place innumerable rank'd
 Under the empire of the regal moon
 Shed o'er the cheerless earth comfort and light.

Nor less the Pagan King his gorgeous host,
 Rang'd in battalions vast of even line
 Immeasurable, with his presence cheer'd.
 He in his heav'nly panoply all-arm'd
 On his curvetting steed from rank to rank
 Rode ardent, and to all enrapt repeats
 His wond'rous vision, which the aid of Gods
 Assures, by Odin promis'd. As the pledge
 Of whose high favor these celestial arms
 Adorn'd his life-swell'd limbs, to mortal dint
 Impenetrable.

Mute astonishment

Seiz'd ev'ry hearer, and all-fix'd they gaze
 Upon their godlike leader: on his arms

They gaze: his mighty shield that like a tow'r
 Red in the beams of morning, blaz'd afar:
 The flaming cuirass, which his ample breast
 Inclos'd in gold, starr'd o'er with gems: his casque
 Horrent with gold and sable-streaming hair
 Dark'ning its fiery brilliance, as the moon
 Appears at full, where some broad eclipse shades
 Her struggling radiance, and alarms the night
 With ominous terror. Wheresoe'er he turn'd,
 Flash'd from him streams of glory. Such his look,
 His words, inflam'd his warrior troops to sense
 Of savage fury. Terrible they stand,
 Revolving death: their swollen eye-balls roll
 With living fire. Like tygers; or a horde
 Of wolves, that from the cavern'd mountains pour,
 When from far fields of battle thro' the air
 Rises the scent of blood. His subject train
 Oskital fires with hope of victory,
 Plunder, and spoil; he animates the fray;
 Bids each man emulous support his chief
 And imitate his deeds. Amund inspires
 His martial squadrons with extatic hope
 Of glory, festal joys, and virgins' love.
 Haldene ambitious, power and regal sway
 Promis'd to conquest's sons. Hubba, dark soul,
 Burning with hate and fell revenge at thought
 Of Regner his dead father's fate, adjures
 His following host by Odin's love, by hope
 Of Valhall's bliss, the torments of his sire
 To wreak in turn on his proud enemies:

Book
 X.

V. 107—136.

Bids them survey the magic Reafen, wrought
 By his prophetic sisters, whose broad folds
 Wave high, presaging vict'ry. Kenwulph leads
 Reluctant to the war his Mercian train :
 Yet bids his troops in battle well perform
 Their part, forewarn'd that known revolt will draw
 Destruction on them all.

Book
 X.

V. 157—166.

Now thro' the air
 The sound of thousand harps confus'd arose,
 And bardic songs in dreadful harmony,
 While from afar, against each other move
 Both armies throng'd in terrible array.
 Standards continuous floating, either host
 O'er canopy with starry pomp : the earth
 Shakes underneath the tread of armed powers.
 Blaze flash'd on blaze reflected, as the hosts
 Advance, like clouds on clouds by tropic winds
 Compell'd, that charg'd with meteor fires and storms,
 Slowly advance to elemental war.
 Nor pause is given : leaping with frantic joy,
 Shouting aloud the Danish squadrons rush
 To battle : thousand arrows all the sky
 Darken, while underneath broad-flaming swords
 Flash in red circles, as like thunderbolts
 The Pagans dart on their expecting foes.
 On wings of death opposing javelins fly
 In unresisted torrents that o'erwhelm
 The ranks of fighting warribrs, ev'ry where
 Falling in blood. Resounds the vaulted heav'n
 With noise : the crash of helmets riv'n ; the roar

Of battle-axes plung'd on orb'd shields :
 Tumultuous shouts and songs o'erwhelm the groans
 Of dying heroes, while with piercing neighs
 The war-steeds trample o'er the heaps of slain.
 The dread confusion of that awful war
 Was dark and full of terror, as appears
 Night to the wilder'd trav'ler, o'er some heath
 Urging his haggard way, extended blind
 Along the shores of Ocean, who aloft
 Dashing his mountainous waves in madden'd storm
 Thunders around, and shot thro' opening clouds
 Fork'd light'nings, flashing pale, disclose to sight
 Horrors unknown, from face of which the moon
 Has fled dismay'd and ev'ry twinkling star.

Book
 X.

V. 167—195.

Such was the rush of each contending host,
 As when along Peruvian coasts, impell'd
 By earthquakes, all the vast Pacific rolls
 Whelming within its pond'rous dark abyss
 Full many a tow'rd city, lifting far
 Their harbour'd navies o'er the rocking shores,
 While many a league the floating carcasses
 Of delug'd nations strow the roaring waves.
 Innumerable were the mighty deeds
 Wrought in each adverse host, both undismay'd,
 Both rous'd to highest fury. Above them all
 Terrible, sight-appalling, Guthrun tow'r'd
 In his wide-blazing arms before the van
 Of his high-plumed chiefs engag'd in war.
 So thro' the northern snows huge Hecla rears

His awful bulk, and from his blazing top **Book**
 Thro' the long polar night exploding rolls **X.**
 Pyramids of red fire, that light afar **V. 196—225.**
 The ice-heap'd islands, and the tossing seas.
 He call'd his troops and led their squadrons on
 Invulnerable, furious, where the fight
 Rag'd hottest, as the roaming monster prowls
 The forest, when the thunder of his voice
 Resounds thro' ev'ry cave, as with blind wrath
 He tears the quiv'ring earth: The English host
 Such rage endur'd not, but deformed rout
 Disjoin'd their ranks, and panic flight essay'd
 To 'scape resistless ruin. Then aware
 The mighty Alfred thro' the thickest war
 Press'd, and before his sudden-yielding host,
 Oppos'd himself a barrier: like an oak
 Shadowing his native hills, and braving all
 The whirlwind's savage fury, firm he stood;
 And with loud voice call'd back his recreant troops
 To battle. They astonish'd felt their hearts
 Swell with new courage; rallying, they resume
 Their ranks, and on the foe impetuous turn
 Forward impell'd, as a broad river, swol'n
 With rains and torrents from the hills o'erwhelms
 Hamlets and forests in its foamy course.
 Then rose the storm of war: the mailed steeds
 To battle flew: buckler on buckler drove:
 Rank press'd on rank: in hideous conflict join'd
 The warring nations. Then the blaze of steel
 Fires all the field. Fierce-bounding from the string

Broad flights of arrows, or wide-flashing spears,
 Or rocks on rocks high-slung from mighty arms
 Tempest the air. The earth with sanguine floods
 Is delug'd. As innumerable came
 The messengers of death, as hail-drops fall
 Impetuous thro' mid-Jove, which all their robes
 Dash from autumnal woods. In streaming gore
 Sink deep the death-struck warriors, as when trees
 O'erthrown by whirlwinds from on high are whelm'd
 In agitated waters. Guthrun cheers
 His fainting warriors, and perceives his soul
 Rais'd by supernal pow'r to certain hope
 Of conquest. But the English monarch came:
 Came, as o'er rifted rocks a flood descends
 In mighty cataract, whose astounding roar
 Alarms from far the country. Doubtful now
 The contest rests: novel amaze and fear
 Reign o'er the field. So dreadful shone the glare
 Of obvious-mingling spears, as in the night
 A train of meteors o'er the starry vault,
 Dazzling the vivid moon, convolv'd arise,
 While the awe-shudd'ring people rapt discern
 Chariots and armies mix'd in fiery war.
 Thro' the grim paths of battle like a God
 All-terrible, intrepid, Alfred mov'd,
 Where'er he came, from his resistless arm
 Scattering destruction. Legions, pressing dense
 Between, from sight withdrew and from his reach,
 Withheld the Danish monarch; else had ris'n
 War 'twixt these two, that all the air had rung

Book

X.

V. 226—235.

With tumult, and astonishment usurp'd
 Both armies. Undismay'd the sounding rush
 Of huge battalions on battalions pour'd
 The English monarch met, and with loud voice
 Call'd to his aid his faithful pow'rs. They came
 Immediate. Athelard, gen'rous hero, heard
 Instant, and with his num'rous followers sought
 The scene of danger, nor he brought alone
 His friendly pow'rs. For following his steps
 The noble Osmund led his ardent host.
 So rush'd the sire, as in the forest-glades
 When the young lioncel bursts forth enrag'd
 Against the toiling hunters, near his path
 The brawny lion darts, and marks his course
 With fiery-beaming eyes, lest pow'r o'ermatch'd
 Surprise his young. So to th' unequal war
 Press'd the bold heroes: nor supported thus
 Fail'd then the English monarch to repel
 All opposition, tho' with numbers swell'd,
 As gusts that urge the deep. Onward he drives:
 His shouting train pursue. Before them fly,
 Or fall beneath their stroke, the adverse pow'rs,
 While o'er them irresistible advance
 The conqu'rors, as the tide of ocean spreads
 His billowy waves o'er deep-embosom'd shores.

But not o'er all the champain Vict'ry smiles.
 For in the quarter where Hianfrid leads,
 Attack'd by hostile numbers, to the foe
 The English yield forc'd way. Confusion reigns

Thro' their disorder'd ranks. Perils and death
 Surround the youthful chieftain, who that time
 Victim to savage frenzy sure had fall'n,
 Had not his gen'rous friend, Harold the bold,
 Sprung with a martial legion to his aid,
 And turn'd the tide of war. So if a storm
 Should wreck some hapless vessel on the main,
 When clinging to the mast, or dash'd on waves
 The scatter'd crew wait only death, at last
 Some gallant seaman from the surfed shore
 Launches his vent'rous bark, in whose blest womb
 He saves the suff'ring, joy-transported throng.
 With such relief to his endanger'd friend
 The noble Harold came. In other part
 The youthful Edgar signally display'd
 His daring valour. In the wing where fought
 The Mercians now enslav'd, led num'rous on
 By Kenwulph their revolted King, whom proud
 Ambition to disloyalty seduc'd,
 The gallant Edgar rag'd, and with his sword
 Fell'd shrinking legions, venting his dread wrath,
 As the loud whirlwind o'er the forest flies,
 Ungovernably fierce, when mightiest oaks,
 The growth of ages, groan and sink to earth.
 Near whose destructive steps Rayner, all-stern,
 Collected in his fury, press'd, and hurl'd
 Numbers to ruthless fate. His open'd course
 Led him ere long where by his regal crown
 Conspicuous, Kenwulph to the fiercest war
 Rush'd. But before his meditated path

BOOK
 X.

V. 245—314.

Rayner oppos'd himself. Soon as the King
 Beholding recogniz'd his former friend,
 Fix'd in amaze he like a statue stood;
 Chill tremors seiz'd his limbs: his palsied nerves
 Convulsive shook, till downward to the ground
 Dropt his too cumb'rous sword. With eye unmov'd
 Gazing he staid, and visage deadly-pale.

Book

X.

V. 315—341.

Rayner himself too trembled: shudd'ring awe
 Involuntary seiz'd his manly heart:
 His outstretch'd arm lost then all pow'r to guide
 Its quivering weapon. Solemn silence held
 Awhile both heroes, till th' affecting pause
 At length with speech abash'd thus Kenwulph broke.

"O Rayner, friend belov'd:—if yet that name
 Thou can'st from me endure.—But no! my doom
 Decrees my punishment, and I submit—
 Thou wilt not hear that sacred name profan'd.
 Enemy then, yet dearest to my heart,
 I shrink not from thy presence; for I see
 Just heav'n in vengeance sends me to thy arm,
 A willing victim—Lo! I bare my breast!—
 Strike; slay me instant: sweet will be my death,
 Perishing by thy hand; for I am sunk
 In wretchedness. Take then a weary life
 That cumb'ers its possessor, who could once
 For the vain shade of titled pow'r forsake
 Thee, every friend, my King, my country's cause!"

To whom thus Rayner, sighing deep, replied.
 " Oh ! miserable man ! this shudd'ring arm
 Can slay thee never. Live : but while thy life
 Endures, oh ! cherish of thy former friends
 Remembrance meet, that sorrow in thy heart
 May work some better change, and all thy pow'rs
 May to the paths of duty yet return."

BOOK
 X.

V. 342—369.

To whom the Mercian King. " Too generous chief !
 Rayner, dear name ! ah ! add not to the stings
 Already in my heart daggers more keen.
 That shame I could not brook. Think with what face
 I could behold my former friends, whom I
 Once basely had deserted.—To your side
 I never can return.. End then a life
 Hostile to you, to England and her friends.
 Else will I perish in this storm of war,
 Fighting enforc'd against my countrymen,
 Unless in some dark moment of despair
 My own hand turn upon my guilty breast."

He ceas'd, and longer conference had held
 These pristine friends, had not with thund'ring roar
 The troops of gallant Edgar to th' affray
 Rush'd opposite, and 'gainst the Mercian host
 Effus'd their direst vengeance, to whose aid
 Turn'd then th' impatient Kenwulph, and with pow'r
 Essay'd to ward the desolating rage
 Of the infuriate English. As a rock
 Meets in mid way th' impetuous torrent's force,

While round it boil the madd'ning surges, toss'd
 In foamy tumult; so the fearless King
 Oppos'd th' impetuous legion of the foe
 That on his people pour'd. Yet vainly thus
 Defended: thro' their ranks confusion reigns,
 And whelm'd in irresistible uproar
 The Mercians fall unnumber'd, or in flight
 Seek refuge from the death which their own hearts,
 Already weak, and banded in a cause
 Unjust, expect not to evade.

And now

O'er all the field the Pagan nations meet
 Dismay and foul defeat. Of which reverse
 Aware, the watchful demons high in air
 Confer, assembled, counselling what aid
 Occasion needs the fortune of the field
 Swift to their favor'd people to restore.
 With eager ken all downward gaze, and mark
 The deathful scene, eyeing the sea of war;
 In what part most the conflict rag'd, and where
 Press'd the chief heroes. Such their awful view,
 As when a dauntless trav'ler on the heights
 Of lofty Cotopaxi, or the top
 Of Chimborazzo, where the Andes stretch
 Their endless chain, surveys amaz'd below
 A sea of clouds rounding th' enormous steep,
 Extoll'd like some huge island to the sky;
 Where light'nings flash beneath, and o'er the earth
 Impetuous thunders vent their sulph'rous rage.
 So these. Descending then, the shadowy shapes

Book

X.

V. 370—400.

Mix in the tumult of the fight, and oft
 To sight reveal'd in the war-cinctur'd form
 Of Goddess Valkyries, or else unseen,
 Voices than mortal more from hov'ring clouds
 Exploded, instigate to rage renew'd
 The Pagan chiefs. At such dread bidding mov'd,
 Fierce Hubba led his fiery-darting troops
 Amid that quarter of the field, where still
 Unterrified, the English monarch rag'd
 Hurling pernicious fury thro' the host
 Of enemies. Chief this part woke the fears
 Of the grim pow'rs of death. They saw aghast,
 How from before his arm by thousands fled
 His adversaries, palsied at his look.
 Death marks his course, and tumult, and affright,
 And horror, desolating as the blast,
 The suffocating Samiel or Simoom,
 Blown o'er Arabia's wilds, at whose fell breath
 Sky-dark'ning sandy whirlwinds, whelm at once
 The passing caravans: when prostrate hosts
 Of merchants, pilgrims, camels, sink in death,
 And their stiff corpses strew the sultry wastes.
 Such ruin, such a foe, t' oppose, the Danes
 As by involuntary impulse urg'd
 Rush flocking; Hubba's savage nations first,
 Not far remote. With like emotion fir'd,
 The furious Haldene leads his ardent troops,
 Uniting all their prowess to withstand
 The English warrior's unresisted wrath,
 Whose high example to enthusiasm fir'd

BOOK
 X.

V. 401—430.

His wond'ring people. But th' aggression new **Book**
 Of congregated legions, fir'd with rage **X.**
 Infernal, turns the tide of war. Awhile **V. 431—459.**
 Wavers the scale of vict'ry. Full long
 The sov'reign sole endures the hot assault
 Of the barbarian hordes. His zealous aid
 The vet'ran Herbert to his side adduc'd,
 Prudent and calm: but ineffectual now
 Had prov'd all mortal valour to withstand
 Enemies so inflam'd, or to avert
 Hideous destruction.

Of which doom aware,
 Th' angelic pow'rs, high-hov'ring in mid sky,
 Survey the battle; on the English King,
 Supporting that tremendous scene, they bend
 Their looks of heav'nly love, sublim'd with awe;
 As when on Ætna's high-uplifted top
 The godlike Plato stood, and thence beheld
 (In holy admiration deep-absorb'd)
 The sun ascending o'er the golden waves,
 Illumining afar the ocean, stretch'd
 In wide infinity. Nor then delay'd
 The sons of heav'n amid the dreadful war
 Prompt to descend, and as they wing their course,
 Lament with pity of superior reason
 Effect so sad of human enmity
 Wasting the earth with energies misus'd.
 " Terrible is yon scene. Alas! that men
 (So passing spoke heav'n's radiant ministers)
 Brothers, whom universal peace should bind

In social union, state then like our heav'n,
 Their theatre of trial should transform
 Into a hell, where furious discord reigns,
 And ev'ry vulture passion tears the soul !
 All pass but to one grave. Why then delight
 Men in each other's path to scatter thorns ?
 Why rather not the rose of peace and love ?
 So heav'n-born truth would tell. Which o'er the world
 Once full-believ'd, abhorred war shall end."

Book
 X.

V. 461—489.

So said, before the English sov'reign, (friend
 And warm defender of celestial truth)
 A glorious band approach, of order high.
 The train of heav'nly beings, o'er his head
 Hov'ring, with sway of pow'r divine repel
 The storm of weapons that from ev'ry side
 Show'r'd, and the flashing falchions which around
 Press'd to destroy. From mid a radiant cloud
 Soon to the view reveal'd, where fair he sat
 Inspher'd, a shape divine in argent robe
 Cinctur'd with a cerulean zone, appears.
 Love on his count'nance shone. His orient hand,
 Soft as a dewy beam that o'er the sky
 Streams from the sun at eve, he calm outstretch'd,
 And touch'd th' adoring monarch. Form more fair,
 Shone never Phœbus, God of light and song,
 Nor the chaste Empress of the silver bow,
 Nor the sweet Goddess of the loves and smiles,
 When amid fields of fame their presence cheer'd
 Pelides, or the favor'd chiefs of Troy.

Celestial influence thro' the hero thrill'd,
As words of sound harmonious broke the air.

Book
X.

V. 490—517.

“ Celestial favorite, thy glorious cause
Angelic natures with their pow'r befriend.
Fear not the numbers of the foe. The day
Is not yet spent; and ere yon sun descend,
Thy arms shall wrest the dubious victory.”

Alike in other regions of the field
The heav'nly throng, apparent, or by voice
Mysterious, summon to the dang'rous fight
The chiefest warriors: thro' their souls inspiring
Undaunted hope, and renovated pow'r.
Nor here their labour rests: for on the Danes,
Unveiling thro' the air their sun-bright shapes,
Sudden they flash intolerable day:
The blaze of splendor, dazzling all the air,
O'erpow'rs their darken'd gaze. Then 'mid his host
Th' inspired Alfred o'er the field atchieves
Prodigies of high prowess. Swift they turn
The tide of battle and thro' hot uproar
Drive their fierce foes in clamorous pursuit.
All Denmark fled. Innumerable fall
Battalions, whelm'd amid a sea of gore.
Death universal reigns. On either side
Sunk then full many a hero, whom the Muse
Fails to recount. Amid the English host
The gallant Octa fell: a beauteous youth,
Of virgins lov'd; nor mid that war avail'd

Book

V. 518-547.

Whelm'd o'er the plain in strong convulsions grasp
 The earth with dying hands. O'er them their foes
 Indissoluble, unresisted, rush,
 A stormy deluge; fierce-expanded hoofs
 Fly o'er re-echoing arms, and heaps of slain.

Book
 X.

V. 548—576.

Terribly o'er the field the English fire
 Each other to tremendous deeds. Beside
 The monarch's side, where dealing wonders fought
 The gallant Athelard, Oddune the brave
 Shouting address'd him: bade him that high post
 Maintain, tho' in his country's cause he fall.
 Alas! well nigh predicted. As he spoke
 A pond'rous spear from Guthrun's hand transpierc'd
 His shield and glitt'ring corslet. From the wound
 Issued a sanguine stream. Backward he shrunk
 Awhile; around him throng'd his shudd'ring train.
 That chance the English monarch saw, and felt
 His bosom swell with deep regret, for dear
 In his esteem th' heroic youth he held.
 His course he stay'd not, but incens'd with rage
 Rush'd onward: opening his terrific way
 Thro' flying foes, he came at last, where seen
 From far, the Danish King with haughty words
 Rallied in vain his all-disorder'd troops.
 But who shall paint the terrors that arose,
 When to oppose each other furious flew
 Both monarchs, with loud tumult and uproar,
 Nor less than if two piny rocks below
 By earthquakes agitated should collapse

In ruins. From around them swift retire
 Th' astonish'd multitudes. No word delays
 Th' impetuous conflict. Each assails his foe
 Insufferably fierce. Their obvious steeds
 High-plunging shock with awful pow'r. Both dash
 Together their deep-sounding shields, or hurl
 With steadfast arm their massy-quiv'ring spears,
 Or wave the light'ning of their fiery swords,
 That fall with pow'r on helm, and shield, and mail;
 But long in vain the English chieftain smote
 The Dane's invulnerable arms, nor less
 Th' exulting Pagan on his wond'ring foe
 Darted in vain his black revenge; uncrown'd
 With hop'd success. Whether above some hand
 Celestial, or his own diviner skill,
 Urg'd from the Christian King the strokes of death.
 On whom as with fresh fury sprung aloft
 The Danish war-horse, in his mailed breast
 The English monarch plung'd a spear. With pain
 Snorting, fell backward from on high the steed,
 And falling, from his lofty seat expell'd
 His armed lord. He to the gory ground
 With tumult sunk: loud-roar'd his shatter'd arms:
 While from his pow'rless hand, faint-graspe, flew
 His sword, celestial gift. Him thus unarm'd
 The tow'ring victor saw, stretch'd huge along
 The bloody earth, yet fail'd to strike. He seem'd
 Like some rock-lifted beacon, which from far
 Mariners oft have deem'd the rising moon,
 When whelm'd at last in a resistless storm
 It falls, and ruinous spreads the delug'd strand.

Book

X.

V. 577-607.

To prove his pow'r, the English sov'reign calm
 Seiz'd with his spear his adversary's sword,
 Where the hilt meets the glitt'ring blade, and high
 Uplifting, grasps it in his own mail'd hand.
 Then the fall'n King fatigue or frantic fear
 Had sore oppress'd, tho' cas'd in pond'rous arms,
 Invulnerable of mortal stroke, unless
 Ætherial spirits, friendly to his cause,
 Had to his aid descended. They aware
 Of his mishap, in a thick cloudy veil
 Shroud, and from pressure of his enemy
 Withdraw him. High amid the passive air
 They bear him, gliding without step, above
 His routed legions, to a safe retreat.
 Nor this suffic'd: for o'er the conqu'ring host
 (To stay th' impetuous torrent of pursuit)
 Th' infuriate fiends hurl down all premature
 Clouds of thick darkness. But in vain. Pursuit
 Delays not. Thro' the robe of sentient night
 Press the triumphant English on their foes.
 Tumult, and disarray, and flight, and fear
 Usurp in anarchy the fatal field.
 The flying victims yield to certain fate.
 Pale consternation stalks aghast amid
 The vanquish'd army, while behind with rage
 The shouting victors throng. Loud sounds the surge
 Of blood. High over heav'n dark-moving clouds,
 Heap'd vast by many a dim o'ershadowing arm
 Spread like an universal shroud of death;
 O'er which at times a blaze of dreadful light,

Book
 X.

V. 608—637.

By angel pow'rs effus'd, with meteor flash
 Struggles, the terrors of that dismal war
 Awful-augmenting. But no terrors stay
 Th' infuriate conqu'rors. O'er the champain wide
 They drive the adverse nations with alarm,
 Implacable, insatiate. These recede
 Back on their wide-stretch'd camp. But such confines
 Not intercept their stern pursuers. They
 O'er lofty mounds and deep intrenchments urge
 Their clam'rous passage: and the hostile camp
 Invade with fierce assault. Which gain'd, ere long
 O'er prost'rate tents and altars huge o'erthrown
 They chase th' astonish'd Danes. Nor these at last
 Find refuge, till thro' Exham's tow'red walls,
 Flying, they choke in crowds th' expanded gates.
 Here shrieks of women agonize the air
 Who fir'd with horrid frenzy, instigate
 Their husbands, lovers, to renew the fight,
 Back to return, or here to stand and die.
 In vain: the Danish legions, struck with fear
 Unwont, seek only to escape. Behind
 Destruction urges: and throughout their host
 Disorder blind prevails and rout. Who gain
 The town, return no more. Full many fly
 In wild confusion o'er the distant plains,
 Scouring the country, that pursuit is vain.

BOOK

X.

V. 634—666.

With slaughter tir'd, at last the English hosts
 O'er all the Danish camp range unoppos'd:
 Some o'er the field of fight retrace their way.

Vict'ry elates their crest. With haughty stride **BOOK**
 They mark the champain, strown with dead, where bleed **X.**
 Their foes, their countrymen; and unappall'd V. 667—693.
 They see around a sanguine ocean roll
 In torrents. Far thro' heaps of slaughter press'd
 The purple flood, as the deep Ganges winds
 In India's solemn wilds his mighty course,
 And thro' incumbent hills a passage broad
 Impetuous opens, where Himmeleh lifts
 Her hoary rocks; receiving in his waves
 (Believ'd divine) the consecrated dead,
 From many a distant region. The dread scene
 Thro' many a noble heart now sadly woke
 The sigh of deep regret, while to the soul
 Press'd the remembrance of both hosts, so late
 Glorious and pow'rful, with effulgent blaze
 Of warlike splendor moving to the fight,
 Now prost'rate thus in ruins. Such the scene,
 As where amid the eastern climes arose
 Palmira's far-fam'd glories, to whose seats
 The richest caravans of empires throng'd,
 Spreading o'er Europe's nations wealth and state;
 Yet now have sunk her gorgeous palaces,
 Her dome-roof'd fanes, her solemn porticos,
 Whose marble monuments along the plains
 Fall'n in superb confusion far around,
 Lost in mute awe, the ling'ring traveller views.

Now Hesper on the twilight's dewy front
 Had hung his silver orb. With musing thoughts

That from impetuous tumult gradual sunk
 To calm composure, the predominant host
 Possess the adverse camp, designing here
 To fix their martial residence, and hold
 Their foes within the town in strict blockade.

Book
 X.

V. 696—724.

Now near the outskirts of the camp appear
 A beauteous female throng, virgins, and wives,
 Longing to meet their lovers, husbands, safe,
 While bards with choral harmony attune
 Loud hymns of victory. Before them all
 Conspicuous, England's grace, her honour'd Queen,
 Conducts the bright procession. In each hand
 She leads a blooming son: this, Edward, doom'd
 One day to reign and imitate his sire
 In kingly dignity: that, Ethelward,
 Heir of his father's love for learned arts.
 Near her a noble matron in her arms
 Bore the Queen's infant hope, a daughter fair,
 That Ethelfleda, who one day shall fill
 Her father's throne, and to th' admiring world
 Proclaim a portion of his soul her own.
 From far the conscious monarch ey'd the scene,
 As he most active tow'rd the hostile tents
 Pass'd, and collected from the fields of fame
 His countrymen triumphant. At the sight
 Rapturous joy thrill'd all his frame. A crowd
 Of high sensations swell'd his soul, as he
 The King, the Gen'ral, husband, father, saw
 All to himself and to his host most dear.

Transcendent beauty then his royal spouse
 Seem'd to adorn. Majesty in her air
 Blended with ev'ry softer grace, and love
 Pure, unaffected, shone. Such she appear'd
 As when the moon amid her train of stars
 Walks o'er the wood-crown'd hills some cloudless night,
 And on the bosom of the streamy vale
 Beams gold, and whispers peace. Luxuriant wav'd
 Her dark-brown tresses o'er her flowing robes.
 Her blue eyes sparkled from afar. The bloom,
 Thrown o'er the iv'ry whiteness of her cheeks
 Glow'd, as the wild-rose thro' her dewy leaves
 Bends blushing o'er the snowy hawthorn flow'r.
 An angel smile o'er her fair features play'd.
 Her gently swelling bosom, which a zone
 Bound, yet its tender tumult scarce restrain'd,
 Seem'd like a playful lamb, whose silky neck
 The shepherds wreath with garlands of fresh buds.
 So she approach'd in matchless dignity
 Between her beauteous offspring, with more grace
 Than the swan boasts, when o'er the glassy lake
 Regal in majesty she sails along
 Between her cygnet train, and with arch'd neck
 Proudly beholds their shadows imag'd there.

Full soon the monarch-husband from his steed
 Descended: her, his solace and delight,
 He sought, where mid her train of noble dames
 Half-compass'd round, she came. Soon in his arms
 Fondly he clasp'd her, and her vermeil lips

Book
 X.

V. 725—753.

Press'd with a holy kiss. She o'er his neck
 Tenderly hung. Expressive silence spoke
 Her full heart's feelings. Smiles of extacy
 Illum'd her face, and from each glist'ning eye
 Roll'd o'er her cheeks rapture's delicious tears.
 Gently he rais'd her, and with soothing voice
 Address'd. "Oh! dearest, loveliest, best, again
 Av'n to thy arms restores me. I once more
 My soul's better part, possess, and these
 Ledges of thy virtuous love, for whom
 Feel no higher wish than to behold
 Each rise the pattern of thyself. But see!
 Victory smiles o'er all this glorious host:
 Heav'n has their zeal in their dear country's cause
 Blest, and ere long will crown with full reward,
 That all our woes shall end. Adored peace
 Shall heal our country's wounds: and ev'ry man
 Shall sooth his age in his own quiet home.
 Come: hush each fear: be happy: this proud night
 We give to joy." He spoke: then in his arms
 Lifted his lovely boys: whose blooming cheeks
 He press'd to his warm lips: and to heav'n's care
 Blessing commended each, while both at once
 With lisping prattle welcome his return.
 Nor the last gift of his delighted spouse
 Innocent smiling in the nurse's arms
 Pass'd he unnotic'd, but with finger soft
 Touch'd her fair features, in whose op'ning grace
 He trac'd the likeness of the parent flow'r.
 The Queen with fondness mark'd his kind regard,

And, calm'd to sweet composure, soon with voice
 Musical as a shepherd's distant flute
 Warbles along a valley-parting stream,
 Utters in accents meek her conscious joy,
 And gratitude to heav'n. Th' observant throng
 Melt at the scene affectionate and feel
 Their hearts subdued with tenderness. The King
 Brooks not delay; but leading in one hand
 A sportive boy, the other to his spouse
 Extended, who with equal transport led
 Her other youthful charge, them to the camp
 Conducted thus. Bards as they move along
 Sound graceful harmony. All at the tents
 Swiftly arrive.

Book

X.

V. 784—813.

And now from ev'ry side
 Obedient of command, the scatter'd host
 Came flocking. Thro' their adversaries' camp
 They pass, admiring all its strange array,
 Solemn-appearing as the brighter moon;
 Shed o'er the scene her shadowy beams. They mark
 Huge altars rear'd to fabled Deities;
 And store immense of plunder, cattle, steeds,
 And forage torn from many a wasted farm.
 Joy throb'd within them, as they now release
 A captive throng of fellow-warriors, lost
 In pristine battles, here to tents or trees
 Tied by ignoble bonds, and doom'd ere long
 Victims of sacrifice to bloody Gods.
 Treasures they find of costly arms, and store
 Of luscious mead, and wines, and viands rich,

Wild-boars, and deer, and sav'ry flesh. The host
 Exults aloud. The glitt'ring domes are fill'd.
 Rapture succeeds thro' ev'ry tent and spreads
 Long its extatic sway, while many a wife
 Or tender mistress to her bosom press'd
 Her hero safe, and in her smiles receiv'd
 The dearest meed of vict'ry. Ev'n the hearts
 That now receiv'd their treasures pale with wounds,
 Or learnt them left on glory's purple bed,
 Felt grief's keen anguish sooth'd to mild regret,
 Amid the sympathy of gen'ral joy
 Beaming on ev'ry face. Such tender care
 The females fond dispense, as when a storm
 Has roar'd along the fiery heav'n, and rains
 Have dash'd impetuous thro' the bending woods,
 The sun restor'd, the birds their shatter'd nests
 Amid the dripping foliage glad compose,
 And shield their young beneath their glitt'ring wings.

Book
 X.

V. 814—842.

Within the royal tent the chiefs convene,
 Where all with grateful joy the monarch meets.
 The deeds of each he praises, by his note
 Distinguish'd to high honour. Osmund, thee
 Proudly he greeted. And, young Athelard, thee
 Pale with thy wounds, yet anxious to appear
 And prove thyself still safe, with cordial warmth
 Thy King receives. The regal family
 All of thy state enquire: the female part
 (Deem'd then their sacred officce) to thy wounds
 Attend. Such care affectionate then shew'd

The monarch's sister, Burthred's widow'd Queen,
 That from thy heart, o'erlooking station, pass'd
 A sigh of softest birth: yet to thyself
 Then scarce reveal'd. Herbert too, vet'ran chief,
 Prudent as brave, had from the sov'reign's voice
 His meed of thanks. Nor Rayner, thee, grave chief,
 Majestic in thy stern composure, fail'd
 The monarch to applaud. Nor Harold, thee,
 Bold youth; nor noble, loyal Oddune, thee;
 Nor many a valiant thane of humbler note,
 Whose deeds deserv'd renown. Then to secure
 Advantages thus gain'd, the King consults
 With his prime chiefs: fervent he recommends
 Order and vigilance: and deems it best
 To fix their station in the new-won camp
 And fortify its bounds, lest from the town
 Impetuous sallies force their envied post.
 Hither their own wide camp and warlike stores
 Swift to remove; and by the tow'ring walls
 Of Exham and along the banks of Exe
 To range a strong blockade, whence to prevent
 The foe's supplies, or ev'n at season due
 Assail the city with intrepid storm.

These plans agreed, and soon to chosen hands
 Trusted to execute, the royal feast
 Begins: delicious viands o'er the board
 And cheering wines pass round. The female throng
 Wake mirth refin'd. Truest affection beams
 In many a face. The virgins with fix'd look

And sweetest smile reward the youths they love.
 Reigns universal pleasure. Bards resound
 In solemn chorus music's awful pomp,
 Swelling the soul with mem'ry of the brave
 Or melting ev'ry heart in tender airs,
 Image of whisp'ring love. Thus wan'd their hours.
 Nor less thro' all the camp the common feast
 Spreads its reviving stores on ev'ry board.
 Harps wake entrancing melodies: the night
 Wears on apace; and pain and sorrow sooth'd
 Resign their pow'r, while in each tent prevails
 High converse of the fight, and each bold deed
 There witness'd, earnest of blest note that soon
 England shall see all her best hopes atchiev'd.

Book
 X.

V. 572—598.

Now night with silent hand had rais'd the stars
 To their meridian height, and the wan moon
 With duskier orb descending, broader shades
 Mov'd o'er the earth: when weariness at last
 Breath'd thro' the host desire of soft repose.
 All seek th' expected couch, where soon kind sleep
 Whisp'ring propitious dreams hush'd ev'ry sense
 To peace, and from his balmy pinions shook
 Unwonted vigour into o'erwatch'd limbs.

But not at peace thro' the still night remain
 The shadowy pow'rs of darkness. They enrag'd
 At sight of those triumphant whom they hate,
 And their own favor'd host thus from their camp
 Expell'd and shut within the walled town,

Assemble in mid air, and there confer
 Hideous designs, brooding malignity,
 Each height'ning other: and what remedy
 Counselling must repair so dire defeat.
 O'erlooking the wide scene, 'some gaze afar
 With disincumber'd ken tow'rd Wareham's shores,
 Where rides the Danish fleet, preparing now
 Thence to depart, and join their country's bands
 Where the deep Exe his ample harbour spreads.
 Joy at the sight inflames th' infernal crew,
 And hope re-animates; for now they deem
 Innumerable aids, unwearied yet in fight,
 Shall soon arrive, whose pow'r conjunct shall turn
 The fate of war, and to the side they love
 Assure proud vict'ry. Nor they pause: at once
 Full many a grizly troop, involv'd in clouds,
 Rolls afar off, with purpose to escort
 Hither the Pagan ships, and from their course
 Ward danger, whether tempest, war, or guile.
 Others o'er Exham's stately tow'rs repair,
 To mark the routed host, who thro' the night,
 Restless and burning with malignant rage,
 Labour from inroads new to guard their post
 Or meditate fresh battles with the foe,
 As prompt occasion serves. Their active toil
 The demon pow'rs encourage with what aid
 Seems best: observant of their pray'rs, and oft
 In shape divine apparent, or with charm
 Of heav'nly voice rousing the feebler soul.

Book

X.

V. 900—928.

Thus fled the darken'd hours: till in the east
 The breaking dawn appear'd, before whose steps
 Vanish'd the stars, and ev'ry green hill top,
 Blushing in orient lustre, wav'd his woods
 O'erhung with silv'ry dews. Scarce had the lark
 Ris'n from his grassy nest to greet on high
 The gold-emerging sun, and with his note
 Awoke thro' ev'ry grove the sleeping birds
 To join their matin music, ere arose
 The English host: but to no cheerful task.
 For now alas! the heroes, fall'n in fight,
 Await the last due rites, needing the hand
 Of friends yet spar'd to give their cold remains
 A decent tomb. Slow, solemn, o'er the field.
 Bestrown with dead, a long procession moves;
 The sacred priests, bards in their flowing robes,
 Mail'd heroes, and a weeping female train.
 The last sad rites are paid: from tomb to tomb
 Religion's ministers the pious pray'r
 Offer to heav'n: the harp's symphonious tone
 Profanes with no rude touch the mingled sigh;
 And, breath'd around, the melancholy hymn
 From many an eye evokes grief's holy drops.
 Then many a matron from the lips she lov'd
 Takes her last kiss, or o'er her Hero dead
 Droops the lorn virgin. On th' extensive plain
 The host congest high mounds, and raise with toil
 Huge monuments of stones, whose upright bulk
 May point to after times the scene of fight.

VOL. I.

S M

 Book
 X.

 V. 929—957.

Them while these cares employ, lo! o'er the plain **Book**
 Borne on a hasty steed, and in his hand **X.**
 Bearing the naval flag, a chief arrives
 Of valiant mention, Arnulph nam'd, dispatch'd
 On message high from the bold admiral
 Ruling the English fleet. He seeks direct
 The King, whom found, the noble messenger
 High in his master's love, nor wanting sway
 In his own ship, Alfred remembers well
 And greets with cordial welcome. He unfolds
 His embassy.

V. 958—987.

" From England's admiral,
 Oother, bold name, intrepid as discreet,
 I come, and to my honour'd sov'reign bear
 Intelligence, that now the foe prepares
 To waft his num'rous fleet from Wareham's shores
 Tow'rd Exham's war-girt port, there to unite
 The aid of his throng'd crews in works of death.
 Their sails are set. Brave Oother has resolv'd
 To give them battle, and pursue their flight
 With his own ships, now hov'ring on their rear.
 But deems himself to so advent'rous task
 Unequal; such, so num'rous, so inur'd
 To seas, and storms, and naval war, so fill'd
 With desp'rate crews, intent on spoil or death,
 That his own weaker fleet, in numbers far
 Inferior, and with seamen ill supply'd,
 Scarce his best hope holds competent to meet
 A foe so pow'rful. Some great spur must lend
 New spirit, that shall aid the lack of strength.

Nor less, than that he deems, the King himself
 Should on this great occasion to the fleet
 Transfer his presence and advice (so long
 Trusting the army to his vet'ran chiefs)
 Whence vigour, courage, not to be surpass'd
 All would imbibe, when they their voyage knew
 Under the great command of him, whom all
 Proclaim the founder of the present fleet
 England can boast; until his genius taught,
 Unconscious such a pow'r could aught avail.
 Himself, to whom the glory is most due,
 Should therefore share it, if they hope success.
 If not, his skill may mitigate and sooth
 The shame and ruin of the worst defeat.
 A ship by Wareham's port awaits to bear
 The monarch to the fleet."

BOOK
 X.

~~V. 988—1017.~~

He in his mind
 Ponders the new request: then summons strait
 A council of his chiefs, to whom he opes
 The message, and his own delib'rate wish
 To yield compliance. When their full applause
 Sanctions his resolution, to their zeal
 The sov'reign thus: "I go then: and will aid,
 (If so my presence can) with all my pow'r
 Our new-form'd fleet. While absent I remain,
 Herbert and Osmund, wise and valiant chiefs,
 Shall o'er the army rule with equal sway,
 And to its wants attend. For not to me
 It rests unknown, nor often without grief
 Revolv'd, how weak a fleet our sea-girt realm

Can boast her own, her vessels mean in size,
 Her mariners unskill'd. Our navy yet
 Pines in its infancy, tho' Britain lifts
 Thro' waves her harbour'd isle, and nature points
 With plain unerring finger to the sea
 As to her element, her native guard.
 Yet if my soul prophetic darts aright
 Into the bosom of yet future years,
 The time shall come, when not a country wash'd
 By the green ocean, but shall see with joy
 England's white sails and red-cross banners wave;
 When over ev'ry sea her fleets shall waft
 Her commerce and her arts, to cheer, to bless,
 Discovering climes as yet save of the sun
 Unvisited. Returning big with wealth,
 Plenty, and pomp, the treasures of the world,
 Or hurling thunder on her envious foes,
 Around her shall her countless navies glide,
 Like proud swans guarding their own native isle,
 Till all lands own her mistress of the main."

Book
 X.

V. 1018—1046.

Thus as he spoke, a radiant lustre seem'd
 To play around him, and he look'd a form
 Than mortal more. Entranc'd, his hearers clash
 Their shields for joy. With deep emotion fir'd,
 All to their much-lov'd King meekly approach,
 And solemn-bending touch his shield with spears
 In sign of fealty. Nor did not then
 The thoughtful sov'reign long reflect how best
 To leave the host in posture of defence,

How safest ward the dangers he foresaw
 Of many a desp'rate sally from the town.
 Then thro' his soul affectionate arose
 A thought of his lov'd wife, and offspring dear,
 Mix'd with alarm. Perilous still he deems
 The station of the host, and with kind care
 Provident, now resolves from troubled scenes
 Of battle to remove the female train
 To some more safe retreat. His thought he tells
 To his assembled warriors, to convey
 His own lov'd household to the castled halls
 Of Anselm, hospitable thane, whose scite
 O'erlook'd the windings of a distant vale.
 Then to the chiefs, Herbert and Osmund, adds
 Instructions meet to rule with order due
 The army, while the ships his presence claim.

Book
 X.

V. 1047—1075.

These cares arrang'd, the King the council ends,
 And now preparing to depart, seeks first
 The royal tent. Within its spacious dome
 He finds his lovely family: the Queen,
 His boys beside her playing, and with these
 His widow'd sister. On her lap the Queen
 Her infant daughter held, and fond caressing
 Soft to her bosom press'd. The boys in sport
 Had deck'd themselves in military dress;
 One half-conceal'd under a high-plum'd helm,
 Whose streaming hair wav'd o'er him, walk'd with pain,
 Poising a spear. The other o'er his breast
 Bore a broad corslet, and in vain essay'd

To twang a bow that mock'd his little hands.
 Their mother mark'd their play, and oft with smiles
 Bade them desist; unheeded, or with looks
 Of asking innocence, won to assent.

Book

X.

V. 1076--1104.

The father near him takes his boys, and soon
 Seated beside his consort, gradual tells,
 In gentle tone, soothing her wak'd alarm,
 Mild as the dove coos whispering to his mate,
 His purpos'd expedition, and intent
 Herself and these his family from scenes
 Of danger, now too imminent, to lead
 To a more safe retreat. Surprise, distress,
 Contending in her bosom, from her cheeks
 Bade the bloom vanish, and a saintly pale
 Spread o'er her face, as twilight's grey approach
 Drives from the western heav'n its purple clouds.
 At last these words found way. "My honour'd lord,
 My love, my husband, dearer far than life,
 Wilt thou then leave me? Am I to forego
 Thy presence? How shall I exist, forlorn
 Of thee? Thee absent amid perils, storms,
 And battles on the loud, remorseless deep,
 To thee unwont: oppos'd against a foe
 Bred on the savage element, inur'd
 To tempests and destruction, in his pow'r
 As in his numbers matchless. Oh! my heart
 Prophetic tells me, if thou go'st, I now
 Gaze on thee the last time. Oh! I perceive
 All places then alike will seem to me

Pregnant with horror. England will contain
 No safety. Desolation, wars, and death,
 Will overrun her realm. Slav'ry, and spoil
 Stalk o'er the land uncheck'd."

Book
 X.

v. 1108—1115.

She stopt, but soon
 Her earnest voice renew'd. " Reflect, my love,
 On all that thou hast done. Consider well
 All that in fondest hour thou oft hast told me
 Remains thee yet to do. What hopes sublime,
 Born with thyself, ask their own father's hand
 To rear them. Wilt thou go, while yet the course
 Of vict'ry leads thee to thy dearest aims,
 And plunge in death amid the perilous main?
 For sure thou wilt be lost; and then in thee
 England is lost for ever. All her hopes
 That gild with beams of light these gloomy hours,
 Will sink in darkness, like the grave's. Myself
 A widow, like thy sister; and these babes,
 Dear to us both, whom often in his arms
 Their father took and tenderly carest,
 Fatherless orphans, and of ev'ry ruffian
 The cruel sport. Their father then will lie
 In the cold bosom of the sea, or led
 Captive perhaps to foreign climes, whom then
 Not England's wealth can ransom; or prevent
 By ignominious tortures to expire.—
 Oh! my soul sickens, as pale fancy lifts
 These horrible presentments to my view.
 Without thee nothing can proceed. On thee
 Alone, thy country's dawning comfort rests.

Quit then intents so dreadful-wild."—

She paus'd,

BOOK

X.

V. 1135—1164.

O'ercome with deep emotion : yet with look
Of pleading beauty, as her heart would break,
Gaz'd in his face ; his purpose still she deem'd
Unshaken : and resum'd

“ I fear thee firm.

But if thou wilt go, and thy fixed thoughts
Brook not opposure of a woman's will,
Yet hear my pray'r. Once there were hours, my love,
When what I wish'd could never be denied.
Oh ! if I ever listen'd to thy talk,
If, won, I ever at the altar call'd
Thee husband, owning thee my bosom's lord,
If I have been the mother of thy babes,
Let me attend thee. Go not thou alone :
Let me too share thy dangers and thy fate.
For we are one. What is thy pain, thy lot,
Is also mine. Never shall chance of war
Separate us : nor leave behind in grief,
In unknown miseries, part of thyself !
Pity me : quit me not in agony.
Near thee, I can console thee in distress
(Sweet office !), and beside thee patient wait
To cheer thee in fatigue, lull thee to rest,
When the winds howl and dangers glare around.
For tho' when absent from thee, I am weak
And womanish, yet near thee I am bold,
Constant, serene in danger, and reflect
Back on thyself a ray of thine own spirit.

Joyful I share thy pains, howe'er severe,
And ev'n to perish, yet with thee 'twere sweet."

Book
X.

V. 1163—1194

So saying, o'er him tenderly she hung,
While to relieve her throbbing heart, her eyes
Silent o'erflow'd with pearly drops. She look'd
(As o'er him bent her lovely form) most like
Heav'n's beauteous bow what time the sadden'd skies
Distil their showers, fair-glitt'ring in the beams
Of the opposing sun. Her soon the King,
Fond looking in her count'nance, thus address'd.

" Loveliest of women, excellent as dear,
I feel thy noble soul exalt my own,
While thy affection melts me and subdues.
Thy gentle accents wake within my heart
The husband, father, brother; that almost
Love, pity, rev'rence of thyself, and these
Thy darling offspring, shake me to forego
My purpos'd resolution, and resign
My destin'd task to some inferior hand.
But no! be all thyself. Let no vain fears,
No weak foreboding of too tender love,
Unnerve thy wonted calmness. Let thy sons
Inherit from their mother, England's Queen,
A fix'd and valiant heart. Urge me no more
To quit th' attempt of an imperious task,
Prompted by duty, big with high'st design.
England now calls me from the fields of fight
To guide her infant navy, and defend

On her own element her sacred shores
 From swarms of fierce-invading, Pagan foes.
 Shall England's King shrink back, or stand aghast,
 Withdrawing from the combat, till his land
 Sound with the shouts of robbers unoppos'd?
 Shall England's Queen withhold him, if he dares
 Forbid th' approach of these marauding hordes,
 But coping with them on the open main
 Ingulf them there, ere yet their bloody steps
 Pollute a grass or flow'r of his fair isle?
 No! I must go, and like a man; a King;
 Not bearing thee associate, tho' most dear.
 I go, and with heav'n's blessing will perform
 Th' exalted charge assign'd me. Yes! I feel
 My heart assures me conquest, and the aid,
 The arm of heav'n in its own cause. Ere long
 I shall return repaid with victory,
 And honour, presage of yet future triumph,
 When England's sons, inspirited, shall chase
 From off the bosom of their wounded land
 These furious, foreign wolves, that drain her blood.
 Then order, peace, and happiness shall come
 In graceful train, and hand in hand dispense
 Their genial influence into ev'ry home.
 Now should I even fall, my death would prove
 A high example to all England's sons,
 Rather to perish than to live base slaves.
 Millions of warriors would spring up to fill
 My place, in valour equal, firm, resolv'd,
 Unconqu'able as united: who should then
 Place England's glory on eternal base."—

Book

X.

V. 1193—1193.

He paus'd a moment, then from his high thoughts
 Relaxing, on his family around
 Gaz'd, and thus added in more tender tone.

BOOK
 X.

V. 1834—1832.

“ Nor then, would you, dear treasures of my soul,
 Me lost, be widow'd, orphan'd, comfortless.
 That gracious Being, who the unfledg'd bird
 Feeds, and each houseless tenant of the plain;
 Who nurtures ev'ry flow'r that decks the field;
 Would be to you a better father, friend,
 And comforter, and as he knows you good,
 In ev'ry peril would defend you all,
 And give you hope and solace, born of heav'n.
 Trust then to that kind Providence, whose eye
 Looks over all its works, and must protect
 The favor'd virtuous with peculiar care.
 Of me a tender memory you still
 Would cherish, mingled with a noble pride
 That in my country's cause I bravely fell.—
 But hence that painful picture; which I see
 Softens thy soul afresh and from those eyes
 Renews their current of too tender drops.
 For rest assur'd; I shall return to share
 Thy lov'd society for many years.
 England shall be releas'd from all her foes;
 Then will we fondly rear this blooming train,
 And teach them to be noble-minded, brave,
 And good, till seeing our own youth renew'd
 In them, our country happy in its peace,
 Blessing, and blest, along the vale of life

We will descend ; old age by slow degrees
 Shall bend us and one grave embrace us both.
 Meanwhile, me absent, thou shalt safe remain
 Apart from danger and grim scenes of war
 Within a shelter'd castle, whither soon
 With meet escort thou and thy train shall part.
 There at each setting day and dawning morn
 Think of me absent, as I will of thee,
 And pour a fervent orison to heav'n.
 Be mindful of thyself and this lov'd flock,
 And calm expect unclouded hours of joy."

BOOK

X.

V. 1253—1281.

He ended here. The Queen awhile remain'd
 Vacant of speech ; at last with softer voice
 Brief she rejoin'd. " Alas ! this infant flock
 Will ever to my gloomy thoughts present
 Their father absent, and thy widow'd sister
 Remind me what myself may soon become.—
 Forgive my weakness, dearest love : but sure
 Prophetic fears now agitate my soul,
 That with unwont alarm is all-awake,
 Doubting I never shall behold thee more.
 Oft have I seen thee march to war, and oft
 Return all pale with honourable wounds,
 Yet never felt I fear. But now oh ! now—
 Something within me to my thought reveals
 Horrid events, and that thyself must—What?—
 Oh ! dreadful image—Hence—I'll not believe—
 It cannot be—No—I will be myself,
 And dissipate these fancies.—Go my love,

My ever honour'd lord ! Against her foes
 Be still thy country's shield. I will implore
 Comfort and hope from heav'n, and till my eyes
 Again feast on thee, still believe the best."

BOOK
 X.

V. 1282—1310.

She said, and proud with fortitude assum'd
 Stood firm : yet soon rememb'ring she must part
 Approach'd her husband, and her lovely face
 Soft-folding in her robe, hung o'er his neck
 Silent. He gently clasp'd her to his breast,
 And unprevented on her fragrant lips
 Impress'd a kiss, lingering as zephyr sleeps
 Within the dewy bosom of a rose.
 Returning tenderness half bade her tongue
 Still urge his stay, but honour in her soul
 And dignity forbade. Yet eloquent
 In silence, ev'ry gesture spoke. Her heart
 Throbb'd high, and spite of effort, flutt'ring sighs
 Betray'd the secret tumult of her breast.
 Long thus she linger'd in her husband's arms
 With unavailing fondness. Often he
 Gently repell'd her, and with whisper'd words
 Check'd her emotion. Lovelier then she shone
 Than wont : tho' graceful ever, now her mien
 Of tender grief had heighten'd ev'ry charm.
 As when May, flow'ry-vested, scatters show'rs
 O'er the green meads, the transient rains disperst,
 All nature smiles in beauty : cowslips bend
 Their spotted bosoms on the pearly grass :
 The landscape shines in beams of soften'd gold :

With azure smoothness glide the streams along :
Sweet breathes the air : the groves with music ring.

Book
X.

V. 1511—1538.

While these soft cares employ him, to the King
Hianfrid is announc'd. The youthful thane
Brooding resentment that no public praise
Had yet extoll'd his mean-deserving deeds,
Still under friendship's specious mask conceal'd
Hate, vain ambition, envy, treach'rous guile.
Receiv'd, with meek submission his request
He offers, with due escort to conduct
To Anselm's quiet halls the royal train.
Thus speaks he. " Royal chief, thy memory
Perhaps recalls, I sav'd thy sister once,
When Amund led to unexpected war
His foremost troops, and on the final rear
Vented his horrid rage. Still let me prove
My ardor in thy service. Let me lead
With escort meet of military state
To Anselm's friendly home the regal train.
So shalt thou know them safe, and I discharge
A pleasing duty, envied of my peers."

His ready care the monarch, ever prone
To palliate error past, accepts; and bids
Haste his design'd attendance. Soon array'd
The sov'reign his reluctant family
Prepares to leave, and many times farewell
To each repeating, quits them as a brook
That wanders murm'ring thro' a vale, and leaves

Flow'rs blooming on his banks, whose modest grace
In many a rural dell his moisture feeds.

Book
X.

V. 1339—1367.

Delay is none. A small attendant train
Selecting, strait the royal hero joins
The naval messenger, with whom intent
On his high expedition now he leaves
The camp: not unaccompanied awhile
Of other noble chiefs, honouring his steps.
Him, passing thus, the conscious host salutes
With acclamation, blessings on th' emprise,
And pray'rs for his return. The female throng
Mark his departing train with equal hope
And tenderer emotion. There the Queen
Long present stood, and watch'd the glimm'ring band
Gradual recede from sight; as dewy mists
Sail o'er the country, when the shepherd stands
Posted on some green height, and views their forms
Rolling away, till the dim mountains seem
Like islands rising from a fleecy sea.
Full soon herself with her domestic charge
The Thane Hianfrid waits, with escort meet
To bear to Anselm's halls. Nor less amid
The gen'ral camp, a noble female train
Prepares to leave the post, and seek awhile
Some not unknown retreat, as choice invites
Or safety dictates. Many a chieftain's tent
Presents a busy scene, while the griev'd wives,
Matrons, and virgins, quit with fond farewell
Their dear relations. So a beauteous crowd,

All with meet guard accompanied, departs.
 A sigh of fond regret their course pursues,
 Mingled with hope. Such seem'd their graceful pomp,
 While led by their fair Queen, the splendid train,
 Gradual, majestic, from the view retires,
 As fades the beauty of the western skies
 At eve, what time at first an ample globe
 Of gold, the sun amid the burnish'd clouds
 Sits thron'd, yet reddening, broadening, as he slow
 Descends, the clouds to deep'ning purple change,
 Crimson, or fainter gold, and all on high
 White, airy fleeces streak the azure vault,
 Till when he final sets, grey twilight spreads
 Her equal shade around, and Night at last
 Under th' embrace of his dark mantle hides
 Ev'ry green hill, and vale, and silent tree.

Book
 X.

V. 1368—1383,

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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